

# TATLER®

TATLER TRAVEL GUIDE 2025

TRAVEL GUIDE 2025  
THE 101 BEST HOTELS IN THE WORLD

# Contents

## Travel Editor

Delilah Khomo

## Managing Editor

Xavier Bastin

## Deputy Managing Editor

Chloe Smith

## Senior Designer

Molly Saunders

## Picture Editor

Elizabeth Wood

## Chief Copy Editor, Supplements

Sarah Edworthy

## Copy Editors

Jasmine Parker,

Tim Willis

## Art Editor

Marlene Díaz-Ellinghaus Lewis

## Art Director

Maria Bancroft

## Digital Director

Harriet Johnston

## Social Media Editor

Alexander O'Loughlin

## Editor-in-Chief

Richard Dennen

## Commercial Operations, Strategy Manager, Travel & Lifestyle

Charlotte Taylor

## Events Manager

Saffron Altmeyer-Ennis

## Commercial Director, Travel

Natalie Moss-Blundell

## Senior Account Directors, Travel

Emma Heuser, Kieran Coyne,

Shannon Seaton

## Commercial Director, Food & Beverage

Natasha Callin

## Classified Director

Shelagh Crofts

## Classified Sales Manager

Lydia Hadded

## Senior Sales Executive/Trainer

Amelia Shepard, Lauren Dennis

## Senior Sales Executives

Isabella Loughlin,

Beatrix Pentland

## Executive & Managing Editor, CNCC

Holly Ross

## Creative Design Director, CNCC

Scott Moore

## Creative Art Editor, CNCC

Rebecca Gordon-Watkins

## New York

Shannon Tolar Tchkotoua

## Milan

Valentina Donini

## Production Controller

Sappho Barkla

## Production Coordinator

George Hulkes

## Chief Business Officer, Travel and Lifestyle

Simon Leadsford

## Managing Director, Europe

Natalia Gamero del Castillo

## SPOTLIGHT

- 5 *Let the good times roll*  
Who says Brat summer has to end? Not *Tatler's* Travel Editor Delilah Khomo, who shares her secret indulgences

## 101 HOTELS

- 21 *Many abbey returns*  
Contemplate chic serenity in former religious retreats
- 25 *Love island*  
Romance is in the air at private atolls and beachside boltholes
- 29 *Suite life*  
Top-notch: penthouses with pools, balconies with views
- 34 *The hottest trotspots*  
Saddle up for glamorous adventures on horseback
- 36 *Mini VIPs*  
Multi-gen miracles: where every guest can act their age
- 42 *Rank and style*  
Enter the VIP bubble and claim your own star billing
- 44 *Cool with a capital C*  
...from Athens to Amsterdam, Boston to Buenos Aires
- 50 *Cinema paradiso*  
Go on location and find filmic allure at these sceney hotels
- 53 *Take the plunge*  
The ultimate pools: to infinity and beyond beautiful
- 58 *Bay watch*  
Where to swim, sun and savour feet-in-the-sand dining

- 62 *Great escapes*  
Cast yourself away to otherworldly settings
- 65 *Fashion plates*  
Scrumptious! Fare play to these enticing gourmand thrillers
- 70 *Utterly transportative*  
Worlds of divine decor: if only this were home
- 74 *All that glitters*  
Gold leaf galore! Revel in the grandest worlds of opulence
- 76 *Paradise preserved*  
Sun, sky, sea and sand: take time to enjoy the elements of nature



## TROLLEY DOLLY

Pack up your monogrammed luggage and tick off stays in *Tatler's* 101 world-best hotels

- 78 *The visionaries*  
A very personal welcome awaits guests in these passion projects

## FEATURES

- 8 *Vine be the glory*  
Raise a glass to Paddy McKillen, the game-changing hotelier – and the world's best wine estates
- 14 *All change!*  
Holidays that heal, enlighten, purify and transform

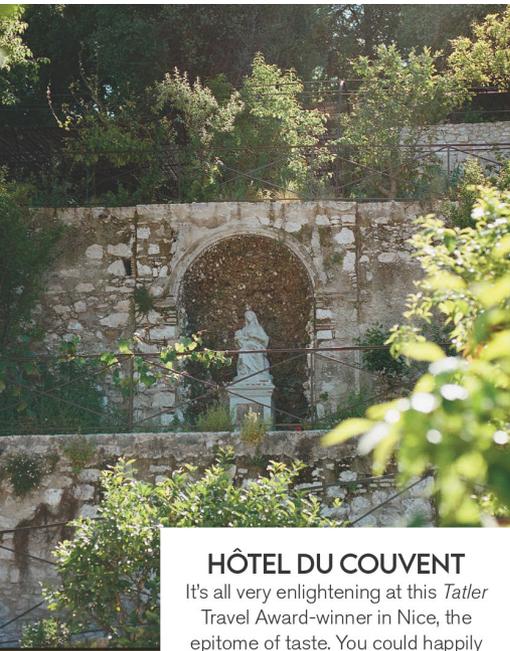
- 82 *Love from...*  
Personal postcards sent by our correspondents in Tuscany, St Moritz, Syros, Zimbabwe and Australia

## REGULARS

- 90 *Index*  
The ultimate bucket list
- 96 *Kitchen confidential*  
Why Jean Imbert is a stellar hotel's magic ingredient

## ON THE COVER

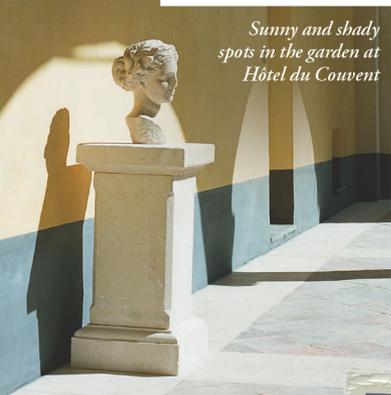
Photographed by DANIEL SACHON Styled by SOPHIE PERA  
Model wears top, £1,930, and bottoms, £540, Prada. Scarf, £272, Pucci. Bag, £15,970, Hermès. Sunglasses, £385, Emmanuelle Khanh. For stockists, see Address Book. Hair: John Vial using Balmain and Babyllis Pro. Make-up: Phoebe Walters at The Wall Group using Dior Forever Foundation and Capture Totale Le Serum. Model: Pau Bertolini at Iconic Management. Stylist's assistant: Sophie Callaghan. Digital operator: Bruno Rauhofer. Lighting: Massimo Filippi. Production and casting editor: Laura Nicholson. All information believed to be correct at the time of publication



### HÔTEL DU COUVENT

It's all very enlightening at this *Tatler* Travel Award-winner in Nice, the epitome of taste. You could happily blow a day's calorie allowance on the breakfast brioche (like the most refined fairy bread) and an omelette scented with orange blossom water.

*Sunny and shady spots in the garden at Hôtel du Couvent*



### CLARIDGE'S

In between trips, life is always golden here. The ethereal glow of the restaurant and bar does wonders for your complexion no matter how many dirty martinis you have indulged in at the Fumoir...



*Delilah at Le Sirenuse, which conjures up Charli XCX's hit 'Everything is romantic'*

# The Travel Editor's BRAT SUMMER

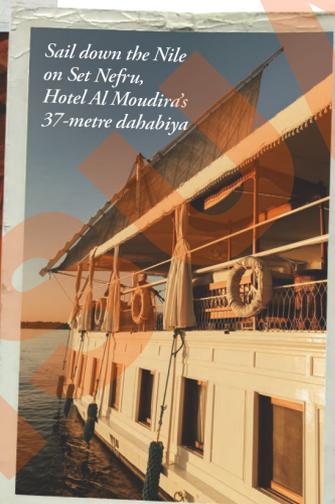
*What is the party-girl zeitgeist? Inspired by the album of the year, Delilah Khomo goes on heady adventures to the world's most unapologetically fabulous temples of hedonism*

### HOTEL DU CAP-EDEN-ROC

The ultimate 'Bratler' hotel: the peach bellinis, the basalt-rock infinity pool and, oh, the cabanas. The dream would be to stay in one overnight as Monica Bellucci is rumoured to have done.



*Guilty as sin: Convento de São Francisco in Salvador*



*Sail down the Nile on Set Nefru, Hotel Al Moudira's 37-metre dahabiya*

### HOTEL AL MOUDIRA

Chasing the sun, not letting the summer fun end... After expeditions into the desert and to the Valley of the Kings, nowhere compares to this jewel-box of a hotel in Luxor. (Just ask Kate Moss.) Take over the Scheherazade room or sail off in the hotel's dahabiya, *Set Nefru*, for the most romantic voyage along the Nile.



Necklace, £240, **ALIGHIERI**. Beach towel, £135, **ISSIMO X RIVOLTA CARMIGNANI PELLICANO HOTEL**. Sunglasses, £385, **CUTLER AND GROSS**. Mules, £625, **MANOLO BLAHNIK**. Swimsuit, £155, **ALEX EAGLE STUDIO**. Free 00 perfume, £135, **VYRAO**. Tote bag, £4,030, **BOTTEGA VENETA**



*These poolish things: the Hotel Il Pellicano pool by Slim Aarons, 1973*



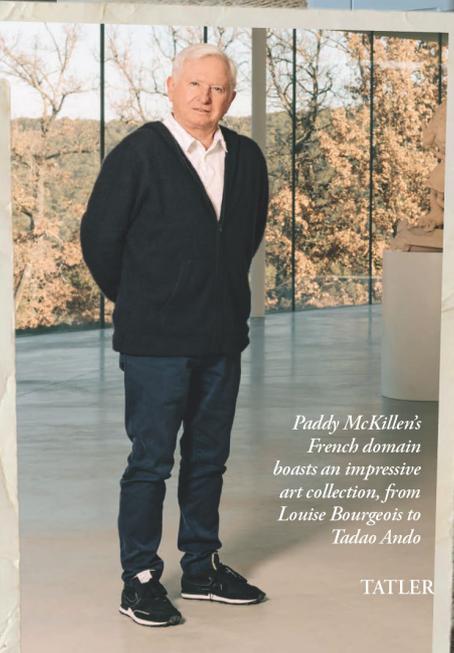
PHOTOGRAPHS: ALAMY; ANAIS BARELLI; SLIM AARONS/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

# I HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE

*Raise a glass to the enigmatic hotelier Paddy McKillen, who has created the premier cru of wine-estate utopias at Villa La Coste*

By DELILAH KHOMO

*Delilah Khomo under a jasmine arch at Villa La Coste*



*Paddy McKillen's French domain boasts an impressive art collection, from Louise Bourgeois to Tadao Ando*

TATLER

**WANDERING ROUND CHÂTEAU LA** Coste, you can appreciate why it gets such rave reviews from aesthetically inclined oenophiles. The vineyards, for example, conceal a series of reimagined centaur sculptures by Damien Hirst; there's a Tadao Ando-designed wine school under construction; and as I stroll through the winery, I'm seriously considering a career change into viticulture...

Then my reverie is interrupted by a suave figure in New Balance black sneakers and a white shirt, his finger adorned by an Irish Claddagh ring that's set with a substantial emerald. It's the proprietor, enigmatic hotelier and notoriously private businessman Paddy McKillen, 69. And he's walking extremely fast, describing new developments and projects at equal speed.

You can see why people call this Provençal hotel-cum-wine-estate the most exciting cultural space in France, especially now McKillen has added a new auberge-style establishment to the art-spa-utopia. The mood is different from competitors – more cerebral, less formal – and that's down to a policy decision. 'The whole point is to open it up,' he says. 'You want an interesting mix of people, and I like that you could come here to spend the day for free.'

Exclusivity combined with accessibility: it's an interesting idea. But then, McKillen always does things differently. This is the man who once got off an Aer Lingus flight at Heathrow, took a black cab to central London, had a quick look round Claridge's, The Connaught, The Berkeley and The Savoy – then bought them all on the spot. (The Savoy Group, later divested of its namesake, became the Maybourne hotel group.) And who dug five floors under Brook Street to effect the most complex renovation Claridge's will probably ever undergo. So the way he became involved with Château La Coste is hardly out of character. 'Thirty metres inside the gate, I'd decided to purchase it,' he says. 'The landscape and scenery told me everything I needed to know.'

Gathered in one place are all his enthusiasms – art, architecture and wine – but as he remarks of the latter, 'I only had my first glass on my 40th birthday.' Sipping on his Château La Coste Grand Vin Rosé, he heaps praise on his long-standing vinificateur, Raymond Gimenez. 'He was practically born on the land, where he's been working the past 40 years; his father Manuel was the winemaker for 41 years before him.'

This vicinity would be hard to migrate from. There's an epic quality to the landscape, which radiates a nurturing energy. That's heightened by such surreal touches as Tung's artwork *Psicopompo*. (An arching assemblage, whose key component is healing Peruvian quartz, it's

named after the mythical Greek scales used to measure people's souls.) Or high above the estate, Ando's chapel, built on the site of an ancient place of worship. Whatever you ascribe it to, this is the perfect place to set your brain on 'low' and luxuriate in the peace and quiet.

Under the trees' dappled shade, there is a preternatural sense of calm. Ahead, the uninterrupted views across the park to the woods are quintessentially *du Midi* – cypress and olive trees, umbrella pines and roses, rolling vineyards – and they stir something in the businessman's heart. 'I just love these vines,' he says softly. 'I love the freedom and silence here.' He claims most visitors share in that 'almost spiritual' response, too: 'You see it with some of the hedge-funders. They arrive so uptight. Then, after two days, they just relax into it. I'm not sure what past generations did to create this magic but they certainly did something...'

That's something that has been amplified by McKillen, whose properties have developed a cultish following among movers and shakers over the years. They're attracted by the sophisticated sensibility reflected in his cool, clean-lined rooms; his enormous cotton-wool beds covered in pristine Portuguese linen; his vast marble bath tubs. As he says, 'If you spend on it and make it the best... people will come.' But it's never been wholly about projected profit margins for him. Only McKillen would have created – or 're-created', as he puts it – a Maybourne hotel group with properties in the French Riviera and Los Angeles that also encompassed the all-suite Emory hotel. Though he departed the group in 2022, he doesn't dwell on what might have been.

In terms of his preferred style of architecture, he says he is forward-looking and doesn't look back. 'I don't believe in faking the past. I love a modern, contemporary, clean aesthetic, no frilly stuff.' And there's something restorative in the balance between minimalism and hedonism at Château La Coste. After all the indulgence – the art tours, Francis Mallmann's flame-grilled steaks, wine tastings – you can retreat to a blond-wood-walled spa to enjoy the hammam, the Vichy rituals and scrubs with black magnesium, the mud wraps and amethyst gel.

For dinner at Hélène Darroze's restaurant, we sit at 'Paddy's table', under an olive tree dressed with the chickest fairy lights. ('It's to do with the lumen,' he says. 'Always do the simple things well.') There we drink a dark-violet Los Chacayes Malbec, which despite its depth is wonderfully refreshing. 'When we age, some of us may gravitate towards a lighter Pinot,' says McKillen. 'But I still can't resist a great Bordeaux, or a fruity Malbec.' Which leads him to talk about the Maximas wine from his estate in Argentina, ▷

**SLOW LIVING**  
Timeless design meets  
Provençal materials  
in Hong Kong  
architect André Fu's  
three new suites for  
Villa La Coste



The Tasca d'Almerita family have lovingly tended to Tenuta Regaleali since 1830



Babylonstoren's traditional-style Fynbos Cottages adjoin the vineyards and orchards

Founded in 1692, Babylonstoren is one of the oldest working Cape Dutch farms in South Africa's Winelands



◁ where there are plans for a new hotel that celebrates big skies, wild horse riding and the staggering setting at the foot of the Andes.

Our conversation jumps to The Shinmonzen, his recently opened ryokan in Kyoto, to the mystical gardens there, and to an enchanting vegan dinner prepared for him in a Buddhist monastery. (Regarding the food at La Coste: all chatter stops for Darroze's theatrical Cavaillon melon topped with sliced langoustines, crowned with a generous helping of Caviar Kristal.) Then we move onto the late writer Edna O'Brien, who

spent time here finishing her last play, *Joyce's Women*, and how McKillen plans to honour her with a room containing her 'priceless' library.

Yes, this a connoisseur's retreat, however you look at it, and a testament to McKillen's knowledge of living well. Resting by a fountain, on a terrace wreathed in jasmine, I watch the condensation roll down my glass. The palest shade of Fragonard pink, the wine is elegant and subtle yet decisively multi-layered. Which is very much like the man who owns its terroir. □ [chateau-la-coste.com](http://chateau-la-coste.com)

## WHERE TO WINE AWAY THE HOURS

### TENUTA REGALEALI Sclafani, Sicily

'Wine is sunlight,' mused Galileo, 'held together by water.' A striking observation only perhaps surpassed by the Tasca d'Almerita family's belief that 'wine is life'. Which is something you may find yourself repeating at midday, when you sip a chilled glass of its Frappato; literally and figuratively imbibing the magic as you gaze on ancient almond orchards and olive groves that give way to row upon row of unfurling vines. Buried deep in the heart of Sicily, an island of glamour and romance, the 550-hectare Tenuta Regaleali estate in Sclafani county has been home to eight generations of this aristocratic dynasty, who have nurtured an incredibly romantic style of Sicilian viti-culture, remaining faithful to the 'blessed hills' terroir, with purely sustainable practices.

Here, guests not only have a deeply immersive encounter with one of the world's best wineries but also of supreme home cooking. To eat pasta with wild fennel and broad beans, followed by veal rolls lightly pan-fried in breadcrumbs and thoughtfully paired with a rich 2018 Rosso del Conte, is pleasure incarnate; made immortal by almond parfait and the island's best cannoli teamed with a glass of syrupy Diamante d'Almerita Passito. Check into the crumbling 18th-century farmhouse, its

shutters painted a vivid shade of Tunisian Blue, and you'll enter Lampedusa's novel *The Leopard*, with a collection of low-slung buildings set around a shady courtyard where turtle doves coo in a giant waxy magnolia tree. And though the rooms are invitingly filled with antiques, crisp linens and gilt-edge mirrors, the pool will inevitably call. There'll always be a bicchiere di vino within reach, perhaps of Vigna San Francesco Chardonnay, a sublime partner to platters of tomato and almond bruschetta. (The tasting sessions of olive oil from the estate and other family properties across Sicily and the Aeolian Islands themselves make the trip worthwhile.)

But what delights more than the excellence of the food and wine is a lack of the pomposity that some seriously successful vineyards can exhibit. There's just pure, impassioned hospitality – as you'll discover on an enlightening and profound tour with Valerio. It all stems from estate manager Corrado Maurigi; if you are lucky to meet him during his visit, he'll bring out the poetry of such grapes as the Nero d'Avola, Nerello Mascalese and Muscat, as well as the land that grows them. And share with you his love of talking to the vines... [tascadalmerita.it](http://tascadalmerita.it)

### BABYLONSTOREN Klappmuts, South Africa

Living off the land comes easily in this fiefdom owned by telecoms king Koos Bekker and his wife Karen Roos. And visiting it is a rite of passage if you're taking South Africa's verdant Garden Route. Nestled among Paarl mountain's granite domes, its 720 hectares have developed organically over the past 10 years; and the original, charming Cape Dutch buildings have recently been joined by spacious Fynbos Cottages, where sun streams through glass walls, canopied beds are draped in diaphanous linen and pristine white bicycles are laid on for exploring the grounds and riding to restaurants. (Don't worry, there are also electric buggies.)

The whole repurposed farm is a love letter to the fertile, wine-making region of Franschhoek, where clusters of grapes hang heavy on the twisting vines, ready to be transformed into the finest Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc and Shiraz. One 'must' is a trip to the tasting room, with its endless views across the bountiful country. But just

as fruitful is a tour of the grounds, fed by water from Table Mountain, where sun-ripened figs and prickly pears can be plucked from the branches. There are also some 8,000 olive trees in neat rows – the greeny oil is a fixture at every meal – and hives that hum with African honey bees, their golden nectar sweetening the home-made granola at breakfast. But this land of wheat and wine really sharpens the senses at dinner. Perhaps in the whitewashed Babel restaurant, a former cow shed where the dishes follow the seasons (think risotto with celeriac and burnt sage; beetroot pappardelle topped with dill cut from the herb garden; fragrant salads with fresh nasturtiums). Or in the bakery, where you can relish beef from home-raised Chianina cattle that has been smoked and simmered into spicy biltong; as well as some perfectly seared steaks and velvety ragu. It's a carnivore's dream tasting menu. [babylonstoren.com](http://babylonstoren.com)

# PRACTICAL *Magic*

*Just divine! From an ancient Celtic healing ritual and a Shamanic trance dance to enlightening pilgrimages and meditations with monks, these life-enhancers are truly out of this world*

## STARS ALIGN

*Contemplate your place in the universe under a sparkling sky at San Camp, Botswana*

**BEST FOR OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENCES: SAN CAMP**

You want a life change? Then come to this place, set in a vast swathe of Botswana wilderness on the edge of the Makgadikgadi salt pans. Here, because you're given an experience that's more subtle and more holistic than the typical African safari, it happens organically. Yes, there are the conventional game drives, but you also get to explore the magical landscape which cradles this romantic little settlement of 1940s-style tents. And to top it all, there's no electricity – hence, no light pollution – which makes the stargazing among the best in the world, with the heavens radiating an inexplicably therapeutic energy. Back on earth, excursions led by such legendary guides as Ralph Boussfield and Super Sande will take you on sensorial journeys so intense that they could be shamanic pilgrimages. And equally enlightening is the time spent with the San bushmen, especially if you join them in a trance dance. Chanting, stamping and swaying; it is an almost out-of-body experience, in which the celestial bodies twinkling above take on a whole new significance. That 'trip' is sure to imbue you with a grounded, unshakeable faith in the universe – not to mention a life-affirming high – and will ever remain one of the most visceral, exciting, powerful healings you'll ever experience in a lifetime. *naturalselection.travel*

**BEST FOR NATURAL HIGHS: SHAKTI HIMALAYA ADVENTURE**

Prepare to be permanently changed by this trip, and to be strengthened mentally and physically as well. Not only by the hiking and yoga, but by the meditating and praying with monks; and also by simply passing the hours with Pujan, an incredible guide who plans your trek from homestay to homestay. (They're models of low-key luxe and are provided with plenty of cashmere, canopied beds and hot showers.) Days here begin with yoga, meditation and chanting,

followed by study with Champola Pemba, a Lama from the Enchey monastery who can accompany you as you dive into the countryside – a patchwork of paddy fields studded with turquoise-timbered cottages – or beyond, into forests of chestnut trees. It's the most healing landscape conceivable; over the six allotted days, as you cross a series of valleys where prayer flags flutter above ancient monasteries, it will bestow on you freedom from all your worldly cares. One highlight that will stay with you is an encounter with Gautam Guruji, a medicine man who can truly instil belief in the power of the mind – and in his 'gift'. He's the real deal. *shaktihimalaya.com*

**BEST FOR TRANSFORMATION: LANSERHOF LANS, AUSTRIA**

The authentic, indisputable OG, Lanserhof is the mothership of the Lanserhof group, which is well known for its extraordinary ability to instil change. The kilos drop off and complexions are transformed, in part through a well-managed regime of fasting that cleans the gut and neutralises acids in the body. But no one really talks about the emotional release, and the deep spiritual enlightenment, engendered by the latter. Sure, when you're in a healing crisis, the first few days of the Cure cannot be described as pleasurable. But at least you're in the best possible hands, and the team not only bristles with Austrian efficiency but also radiates real kindness. (Ask for Dr Walser, who will guide you through the programme with grace and wisdom.) Plus, you can always take your mind off the hunger – and quieten racing thoughts – with a craniosacral session from Alexander Kolerus, whose deft touch will restore you to physical and mental equilibrium. Nonetheless, do muster the energy to Nordic-walk along the dappled woodland trails or to simply forest bathe. And whatever you do, make sure you make a pilgrimage to the storybook Baroque

Heiligwasser church, perched on the side of the Patscherkofel mountain: this chapel is a place of true contemplation, with its healing spring said to have the most miraculous powers. And it's this potent mix of science and spirituality that delivers such significant changes. You'll emerge from Lans crackling with energy, possessed of that elusive inner glow and gifted with a profound sense of peace. And not to mention the flattest stomach. *healingholidays.com*

**BEST FOR BREAKTHROUGHS: GOLDEN DOOR, CALIFORNIA**

Step through its eponymous portal, studded with lapis lazuli, amethyst and rose quartz, and you'll find yourself somewhere that works wonders for those going through bereavement or a break-up. Way before 'holistic' became the buzzword of choice for every spa, founder Deborah Szekely – affectionately known as the 'godmother of wellness' – created this groundbreaking retreat, which balances body, mind and soul to an extraordinary degree. And it must be said, there's a particular ease to becoming 'aligned' here. Your stay lingers in the memory as a series of transformative sensations: perceiving the glow of orange groves and cacti on a silent meditation hike, as they spill across the hills at daybreak; or performing a barefoot labyrinth ritual in the dead of night, following a candlelit yoga nidra session. The therapists here are exceptional. Patsy is a real-deal healer whose daily Swedish massage is the best you've ever had. PT Scotty can be both kind and gentle, while simultaneously whipping you into shape with heart-racing treadmill sprints (all the while delivering some major life lessons). And psychotherapist Danielle Hering's profoundly mystical approach will help you to shed years of baggage: as she guides you through a holotropic breathwork session, you'll find yourself falling into another dimension. *healingholidays.com*

**BEST FOR PURIFICATION: THE GAINSBOROUGH BATH SPA**

The hot springs of Bath have long been renowned for their cleansing and restorative properties. On their account, the Celts worshipped the god Sulis here – the Romans acknowledged the significance of the site in the name of Aquae Sulis – and there's a special magic at play in their three locations. Who knows if that's thanks to the ley lines running through this Unesco World Heritage Site, or to the mineral-rich waters so revered by the Georgians? But to really imbibe and honour it, you should stay at The Gainsborough Bath Spa. Enconced in its Grade II-listed townhouse, you can properly get under the skin of your myth-saturated surroundings. And mere steps away is the town's holiest healing spring, the Cross Bath, a steaming open-air thermal pool on the site of a Celtic shrine. Today, it's still a powerful vortex, reverberating with a special energy, and to bathe here in a private after-hours ritual (meticulously arranged by the hotel) bestows a peace that passeth understanding. Your mind stops whirring, your spirits feel lighter and you emerge with a rediscovered spring in your step. That night, you'll sleep like never before. *thegainsboroughbathspa.co.uk*

**BEST FOR FINE-TUNING: LILY OF THE VALLEY, ST TROPEZ**

Though this elegant establishment, hidden in pine-forested hills overlooking wild and unspoilt Gigaro Beach, certainly repairs the body, it doesn't ignore the spirit. But first things first. If you're looking to slim down and shape up, it offers an optional low-calorie menu curated by nutritionist Jacques Fricker; and you won't notice the restricted carb-count when the food – say, grilled lobster with almonds and coral vinaigrette, and the most sensational egg-white omelette – is so indescribably delicious. Then there is the Shape Club, a Philippe Starck-designed homage to health, ▷

◁ where the raw beauty of wood and stone are celebrated and the vibe is a cross between a luxury wellness sanctuary and a monastic medi-spa; and here, guests book in on programmes that focus on weight loss and better ageing, for which first-class therapists administer a range of targeted treatments. (Perhaps a course of Indiba radio-frequency, to sculpt and tone; or cryotherapy, to reinvigorate cells and reduce joint and muscle pain; or a radiance-enhancing Hydra-Facial, to purify the skin.) However, you've got to have soul. One session with Parisian Charly Thomasson, who combines acupuncture with cupping, will bless you with the most profound of healings, and devoted fans attest to the metamorphic effects of his needlework. [healingholidays.com](http://healingholidays.com)

**BEST FOR ENERGY WORK:  
RAKXA**

On the fringes of Bangkok's Bang Krachao Forest, this is Asia's most forward-thinking spa, and guests can trust that the calibre of its effective energetic treatments would be hard to match anywhere in Europe or the US. (Ask for Oil and you'll be amazed by her scarily intuitive chakra healing.) At this sanctuary, you can meditate in a hyperbaric chamber or do visualisations while strapped into a sci-fi Weber IV Laser therapy bed, which deploys red light to stimulate blood circulation and cell renewal. And you may well have an epiphany after one of Dr Chernkwan Mookprom's traditional Thai Ya-Pao sessions, which require your stomach to be covered in layers of warm towels and herbs, which are then set on fire. Another must-have realignment here is the Marma Healing massage, which is performed by Ying, whose powerful hands are capable of clearing even the most blocked meridians. Just ask spiritual superstar Deepak Chopra, who has an enlightening annual residency in the works at RAKxa. He was particularly enamoured by this place when he held his first retreat here in March 2024. [healingholidays.com](http://healingholidays.com)

**BEST FOR AN AESTHETIC  
HIGH: MONTE VERITÀ**

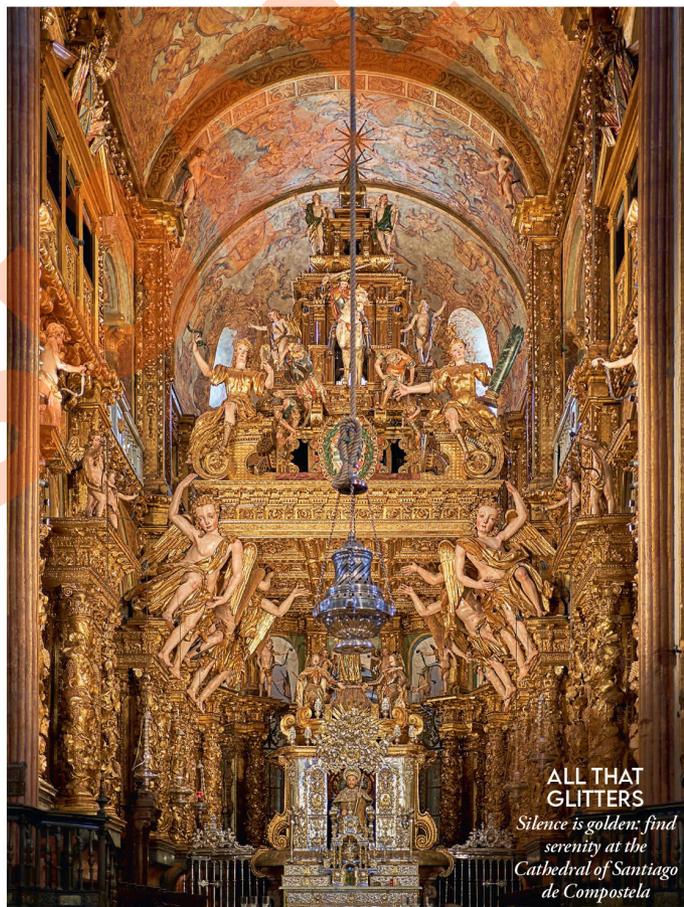
In the early years of the 20th century, Monte Verità – the Mountain of Truth, which overlooks Ascona and Lake Maggiore in southern Switzerland – was the location of a flourishing proto-hippie commune where rich, intellectually inclined idlers converged to write utopian manifestos and worship the sun all while practising vegetarianism, feminism and free love. For 30 years or so, everyone came here – modernists, Dadaists, expressionists, communists, high-rollers – and HG Wells even described it as a place 'where all that is tangled and confused in human affairs has been unravelled and made right'.

Permanent structures rose alongside the original wooden huts and, inevitably, the tone changed over time. Today, the site is a conference and cultural centre, where you're as likely to bump into a software developer as a shaman, and several of the buildings operate as hotels. The 1909 Villa Semiramis and the 1929 Bauhaus Hotel are particularly noteworthy, both beautiful and steeped in magic, and architecture nuts will appreciate the remarkable preservation of the Bauhaus for the minor miracle it is. But the complex is more than an interesting time capsule. The air of enchantment that made it amazing in 1900 still makes it so today. [monteverita.org](http://monteverita.org)

**BEST FOR REBALANCING:  
CHIVA-SOM HUA HIN**

This sleek-lined, old-souled holistic retreat, which was designed by architectural maestro Ed Tuttle, is the reigning queen of Thailand's spas. People rave about its metamorphic effects; its six Wellness Modalities – which encompass everything from de-stressing to immunity-building and all things detoxifying – are big on results. The treatments here are outstanding, and particularly effective at loosening psychic or physical knots. Try quantum healing with Dang, who manipulates various crystals over your body and skull. (After some of her energetic acupressure – which refreshes stale chi and removes all kinds of energy blocks – signs and synchronicities abound.) Otherwise, an acupuncture and moxibustion session with Dr Hashimoto can reboot out-of-whack organs and emotional angst; or try profound personal mentoring from resident meditation guru Sean-Paul. [healingholidays.com](http://healingholidays.com)

*A pilgrimage to Camino de Santiago can be 'as quiet as a prayer, and as powerful'*



**ALL THAT GLITTERS**  
*Silence is golden: find serenity at the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela*

**BEST FOR EPIPHANIES:  
CAMINO DE SANTIAGO**

It feels like one long meditation following the centuries-old pilgrimage of Camino de Santiago, from southern France to the west coast of Spain, through open country and sun-drenched woodlands. Exactly 757 kilometres later, you hobble into the arms of the great Spanish grandmother, Santiago de Compostela. What is it about the Camino that is able to mend years of emotional mousetraps and a slightly muddled sense of who you are? The exercise? The unbeatable beauty of the natural world? The perspective? The primal simplicity of walking, eating and sleeping? It is often, in the words of Evelyn Waugh, 'as quiet as a prayer, and as powerful'. And after days of walking, never will you be so happy to find a hydrotherapy bath, a margarita and the fluffiest of cushions at A Quinta da Auga Hotel Spa Relais & Châteaux. Here you can enjoy and process your seismic emotional and spiritual reset. □

PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES; TEIGAN CUNIFFE

# The 101 best hotels in the world

*Full steam ahead! Roll on telepathic butlers, gold-leaf risotto and a grand piano on a Mongolian steppe. If you're seeking a heaven-sent haven or a private atoll, an equine jaunt or a phenomenal pool, Tatler's definitive directory is just the ticket*

## EXPRESS YOURSELF

Imagine soaking up the atmosphere of the world's grandest train while luxuriating in an art nouveau-style bathtub. The Venice Simplon-Orient-Express has long been the benchmark of glamorous nomadism, but its newest suite reaches unprecedented heights – and scale. Mere bedroom and bathroom this is not: one of the train's 17 original carriages has been transformed into a private wonderland, with more design details than can be explored in a single journey (including its own lounge and secret tea room behind a speakeasy door). If you want to feel as if you've been transported inside a Venice Biennale installation, nothing could compare to L'Observatoire, where artist JR has crafted an artisanal masterpiece. (He's taken his design cues from astronomy so, while you roll through the Alps, skylights allow you to contemplate the celestial wonders above.) For literati, there's a well-stocked library space of Gallimard French novels that give glimpses into the cultural references that provided his inspiration. Likewise, a vinyl collection; the soft scratch of a jazz record is a welcome accompaniment as you chug across mountain and meadow. You'll want to make every moment count, lounging in silk pyjamas as free-flowing champagne and towers of caviar are hand-delivered by your private butler. [belmond.com](http://belmond.com)

TATLER  
AWARD-WINNER  
2025

# Like a prayer

*Blessed are the place makers behind these former religious retreats, now exquisitely preserved as soulful cloisters of calm*

*Hôtel du Couvent has a 20m lap pool in the garden as well as an indoor pool in its Roman-style baths*

*Le Séchoir Suite is a haven of light and purity above the bustle of Nice*

## HÔTEL DU COUVENT Nice, France

Meditating in a folly in the soft early-morning light, you feel something close to nostalgia for the very moment you're in. It's like you've checked in with God – in part due to the building's layered ecclesiastical history. From 1604, the Poor Clares were in occupation; and from 1803 until the early 1980s, the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary. All the centuries of contemplation have endowed this place with a potent serenity that embraces you as soon as you cross the threshold. The Couvent's mastermind was the maverick and brilliant hotelier Valéry Grégo – famed for Les Roches Rouges, and Le Pigalle in Paris – and this utopian-minded scene maker deserves an award for his energy and commitment alone. Not to mention the foresight that led him to embark on a decade-long restoration that somehow just catches the mood of now. It's all very enlightening: especially if you book in with onsite herbalist Gregory Unrein, who might prescribe Lion's Mane mushroom capsules or soothing lavender tea; or find peace in the restored subterranean Roman-style baths, where you can dip in and out

of the tepidarium and cold plunge pool before being anointed with herbal oils in candlelit spa rooms. But inner beauty is only one of the hotel's gifts. It's also an exceptional aesthetic experience, from the exteriors lime-washed in soft yellow ochre to bedrooms resplendent in a medley of understated Twombly-esque colours. Calm and chic, it's sensuous and tasteful. Everything is so fragrant, not least the omelette scented with orange blossom water that's a signature of the colonnaded main dining room. There's an abundance of flora, too: in the huge stone urns filled with sunflowers and foxgloves or in the terraced gardens, where meadow grass and wildflowers creep up cobbled steps, giving way to the pomegranate and fig trees that screen the infinity pool. You're constantly hit by the heady scent of herbs, particularly the sage which also finds its way into aperitivo snacks, served alongside a glass of chilled natural rosé made from Cinsault, Tibouren and Mourvedre grapes. Move on to the pissaladière tart, salad niçoise or other organic dishes featured on La Guinguette restaurant's small but perfect menu and you can't help but cry: 'Mon Dieu!' *Doubles from £330 (hotelducouvent.com).* ▷



*A tribute to Charlotte de Rothschild, La Suite de la Baronne at the Abbaye des Vaux de Cernay has views towards the church*

## ABBAYE DES VAUX DE CERNAY Cernay-la-Ville, France

What an extraordinarily layered past this hotel has. An 1118 Cistercian abbey, once home to 200 monks, it fell into ruin during the French Revolution; in 1873, Baroness Charlotte de Rothschild bought the sprawling estate, filling the property with her medieval antiques and artworks; and now it has found a new incarnation as a hotel whose building and grounds have been reworked with sensitivity to its history by interiors maven Cordelia de Castellane. Here, with a nod to Victoriana, the suites come patterned in paisley; there are touches of wood panelling, velvet sofas, swirling carpets and old-fashioned phones for good measure. The beds are cloud-like, and the gigantic porcelain baths are equipped with plenty of Penhaligon's products. Then there's the spa, housed in the former stables, where they do exceptionally good Tata Harper facials and a

signature Mythique massage; not to mention sound baths, to take you into a further meditative state. However the most powerful healing spot on the estate is hidden in a crumbling folly, the legendary Fountain of Fertility, which has been a sacred spot of pilgrimage since the 13th century. (The story goes that Saint Thibault de Marly gave its waters to the infertile queen of Louis IX – Marguerite de Provence – who went on to conceive 11 children.) Saving the best until last, there's the monks' refectory. The oldest and most historic part of the abbey, with flickering candelabra and museum-worthy Gothic vaulting, this 80m-long room elevates breakfast to a whole new level. Head there for Sunday brunch and discover the most lavish spread conceivable, with towers of lobster tails, oysters on ice, slabs of roast meats and silver platters of shoestring fries. Just pray you can get a reservation. *Doubles from £250, including breakfast (abbayedesvauxdecernay.com).*

## ABADIA RETUERTA LEDOMAINE

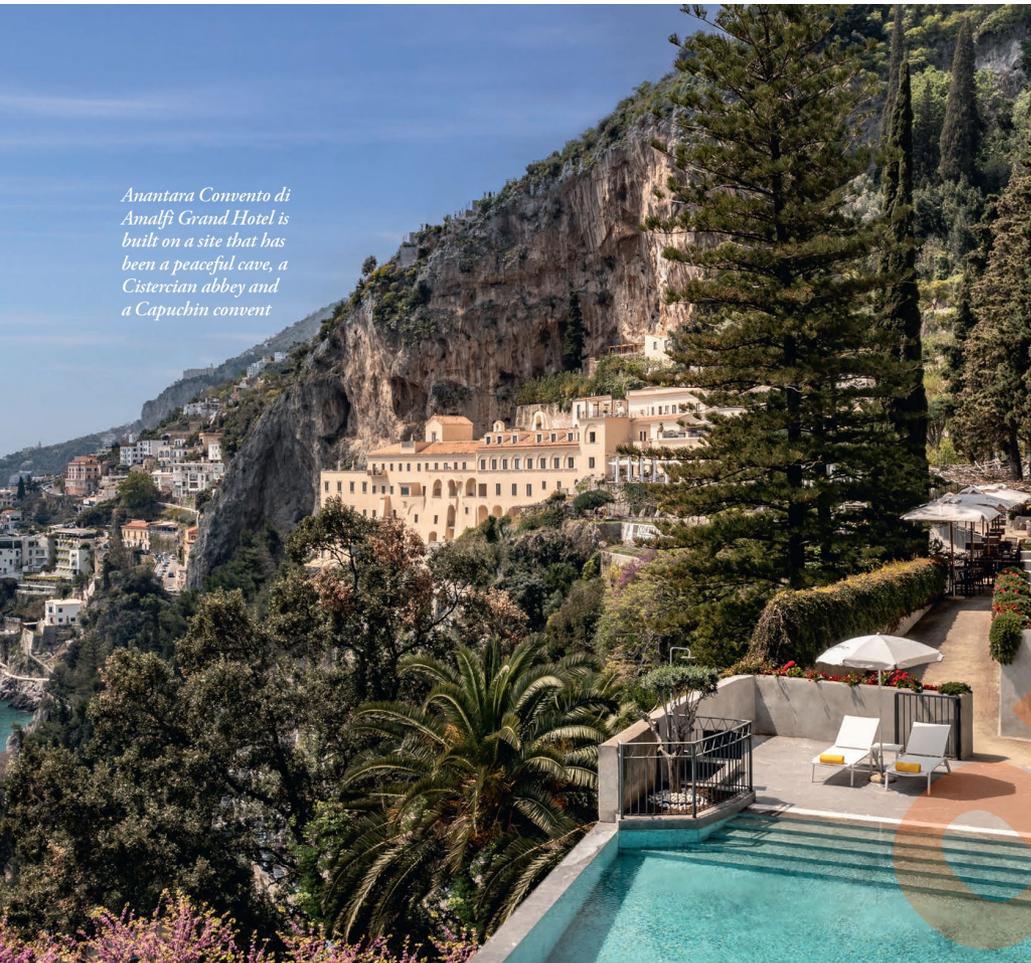
### Valladolid, Spain

This Romanesque abbey, built in the 12th century by a Castilian nobleman who loved learning so much that he entered holy orders for the peace they afforded, glows golden across its own rolling vineyards, between the River Duero and the hills beyond. And what a prescient scholar he was. Two hours out of Madrid and half an hour from the pretty town of Valladolid, it's still a place sought out for seclusion. The ancient edifice in pale-honey stone – always crumbling, always being restored – hasn't just retained its architectural magnificence in the form of its cloisters, refectory, chapter house and unfinished cathedral; the last three, respectively, now a Michelin-starred dining room, a bar and an art space. It has also preserved a deep sense of tranquillity, quiet and rest: merely walking across the almost nine-centuries-old stone floors, you can feel the cortisol in retreat. Of course, much of this atmosphere comes from the hotel being bang up to date, too. The underground spa is an ingenious minimalist's fantasy of granite, cream stone and waterfalls. The bedrooms are all pale wood and fine linen, almost masculine in their simplicity. The food is exquisite, local and homegrown in the monks' garden; and so is the wine, a happy outcome from the vineyard restored with such brio and polish by current owner Novartis. (The fascinating, all-eras art collection, inside and out, reflects the pharmaceutical company's budget.) It's medicine for the soul. *Doubles from £470, including breakfast (abadia-retuerta.com).*

*Sleep serenely in monkish simplicity at the 12th-century Abadia Retuerta LeDomaine*



*Anantara Convento di Amalfi Grand Hotel is built on a site that has been a peaceful cave, a Cistercian abbey and a Capuchin convent*



## ANANTARA CONVENTO DI AMALFI GRAND HOTEL

*Amalfi Coast, Italy*

The Anantara group has executed a perfect restoration here, retaining all the romance you'd expect from a 13th-century Capuchin convent. So welcome to a maze of cloisters and walkways carved into forests of bougainvillea; the rooms inside the thick stone walls possessing vast beds fitted with cool linen. As for views, there's a spectacular prospect of Amalfi port and the coastline beyond from the bar, where they serve an amazing spritz using their own limoncello, sprinkled with lemon mist. And then there's the food of the gods. Chef Claudio Lanuto serves memorable gragnano spaghetti with smoked lemon, squid and ginger in Dei Cappuccini; and his colleague Gino Sorbillo's lower-key restaurant is perfect for refined pizzas. At this hotel, they excel in elevating the everyday, whether it be yoga in the cloisters or a fascinating tour with Franciscan friar Marcus. He will tell you all the secrets of the convent while taking you up to Ravello on a sort of pilgrimage to its storybook churches. *Doubles from £1,093, including breakfast (anantara.com).*

## BORGO SANTO PIETRO

*Tuscany, Italy*

Furnished with a bike and an illustrated map featuring an artist's cottage, beehives and a 'bio lake' – with wisteria-clad ornamental bridges – guests at Borgo Santo Pietro are free to explore a Tuscan fantasy realm. Sitting on a ley line, perched above the River Merse, this 200-acre estate of vineyards, herb fields and culinary gardens is where medieval pilgrims came to be healed en route to pay homage to the tomb of a Templar knight and witness his miraculous sword in a stone. Inspired by the spiritual energy of the site, Claus and Jeanette Thottrup have created a holistic paradise. With great generosity and exquisite taste, they share the bounty of their land: be it farm-to-fork cuisine in the Saporium restaurant, which specialises in foraged and fermented delicacies, or Jeanette's transformative Seed to Skin natural skincare. As indulgent as the aromas in her Alche'Mist serum is Claus's Per Gli Amici rosé, and linguine with lobster bisque in the Trattoria sull'Albero, which is built around a sprawling oak tree. Serenity in the 22 detail-perfect rooms is conjured by hand-painted frescoes, a muted palette and garden terraces with fireplaces. The indoor-outdoor idyll can be taken to an otherworldly level through river swims, sound-bath sessions and curative spa therapies. Nature here is a superpower. *Doubles from £750, including breakfast (borgosantopietro.com).* □



*Feel the purifying energy: the freshwater infinity pool sits in the soulful Relaxing Garden at Borgo Santo Pietro*

# Romantic retreats

*Castaway shores, society boltholes, exclusive party pads: follow your heart and hide out à deux at these heavenly havens*

TATLER  
AWARD-WINNER  
2025

*The Brando is on Tetiaroa, the paradisaical atoll once owned by the Oscar-winning actor Marlon Brando*

## THE BRANDO *Tetiaroa, French Polynesia*

If you like piña colodas and getting caught in the rain – although we're talking flash tropical showers that turn to blazing blue skies in minutes – then this is the place to escape to. Tetiaroa is one of the most extraordinary lagoon settings in the world. Once the late Marlon Brando's very own atoll, a paradise he found while filming *Mutiny on the Bounty*, it has now been reimagined as an eco-desert-island fantasy. And could you get any nearer to heaven? As far as the eye can see, there's the soothing sight of a Tiffany-blue sea; and if you don't want to hang out on the oceanside daybeds, you can always splash about in the private plunge at your villa until venturing out to Bob's Bar for lobster rolls and an imaginative take on a Bounty bar – coconut ice-cream drowned in hot chocolate sauce, served in a shell. It may

seem implausible that there will come a time when you can't eat more grilled seafood or drink more Mai Tais (as this is the most glamorous incarnation of an all-inclusive, with the divine teppanyaki restaurant, Nami, on hand as well). But do save yourself for the most romantic evening: chef Jean Imbert's gastronomic odyssey through Polynesia at Les Mutinés, where a chandelier in the shape of *HMS Bounty* sparkles overhead. There are also adventures to be had in an Edenic spa that offers spellbinding body rituals with hot stones, warmed poultices and tiare oil. And don't miss the snorkelling and in-season diving with humpback whales, the bird-watching tours and boat trips to swim in the Queen's Bath, a natural pool where Tahitian royalty used to bathe. *Inspiring Travel* ([inspiringtravel.co.uk](http://inspiringtravel.co.uk)) offers seven nights from £15,399, full board, including flights and transfers; [airtahitinui.com](http://airtahitinui.com). ▷



*Go minimalist in Mexico at Hotel Escondido, a design-led hideaway on a virgin beach*

## HOTEL ESCONDIDO

### *Puerto Escondido, Mexico*

This sleepy slice of heaven is perfectly located on the Mexican coast. Hotel Escondido is where the glitterati come to switch off and sit pretty with salt-rimmed, spicy margaritas around the establishment's *pièce de résistance*: the 50m infinity pool running parallel to the beach. The order of the day here is oh-so relaxed: find a bright orange sun lounger, feast on gazpacho and guacamole and simply watch the scene in front: crashing surf, geckos darting through the sand and Mexican cowboys galloping past on horses. As the sun dips below the horizon – turning the sky pink, purple and orange – head to Kakurega Omakase, the hotel's cactus-surrounded Japanese restaurant. Take a high seat at the open kitchen, where chef Keisuke Harada whips up masterful creations (think oysters with spring onion, delicious technicolour sashimi, tuna with pickled ginger and red snapper). Then, after a menu of eight heavenly courses, all that's left to do is drift back to the thatch-roofed villas, where minimalist bedrooms are welcome havens of peace – save for the sound of rumbling waves. *Doubles from £380, half board (hotelescondido.com).*

## SONEVA JANI

### *Manadboo, Maldives*

Buoyed by its exclusivity, this Maldivian paradise is a status honeymoon destination for the Euro set and new-age American billionaires. It sits on a brochure-perfect turquoise lagoon; and at each end, the island is vastly extended by twisting jetties that lead to over-sea villas. No kids and little baggage? The one-bedroom Water Retreat is a romantic idyll, where glass flooring reveals fish beneath your feet and a retractable roof invites the stars inside. It's totally private, so you can get away with anything: embracing your inner child by zooming down the first-floor slide into the lagoon, sunbathing in the private pool, or taking an outdoor bath. At the end of the day, summon the omakase chef to prepare a custom menu of sashimi in the villa: from wagyu to tuna, it's all melt-in-your-mouth extraordinary. There are at least a dozen other dining options, from Japanese (at Director's Cut) to gigantic crabs in indulgent sauces in the Crab Shack and Swedish (at Overseas). But the highlight is surely So Wild, where guests are cocooned in gardens and served dishes sourced from the surrounding plants, reviving ancient recipes from the Indonesian Spice Islands. Once your eyes have adjusted to the flickering candle-lit setting, you will discover a beautifully altered, slow perspective. *Cazenove+loyd (cazloyd.com) offers six nights across Soneva properties from £13,595, including transfers.*



*Sliding roofs above the master bedroom suites at Soneva Jani reveal star-studded skies at night*

## MARBELLA CLUB

### *Málaga, Spain*

There's nowhere more romantic, nor out-and-out fun, than the Marbella Club, Prince Alfonso zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg's original Costa del Sol party pad and, in its day, haunt to the likes of Brigitte Bardot and Cary Grant. With its glorious turquoise livery, matching the pool, it's a fantastical complex, comprising a series of restaurants with different vibes: chic, summer-spritz garden party at the kitschy beach club; sophisticated Hamptons style for lunch by the pool. But there's nowhere more romantic than The Grill, whose cohort of cream-suited waiters and royal-worthy silver service delivers the kind of old-world grandeur that courting couples adore. Lighting is everything, and here the trees are strung with twinkling bulbs; two stumps each bear at least 20 tall, thin glinting wax candles; and with the tables emitting a golden glow from poised, sculptural lamps, it's pure theatre. To eat, expect classics such as parmesan soufflé or lobster thermidor. But if music be the food of love, there's a gorgeous soundtrack to proceedings, provided by the pianist at the adjacent Summer Bar, a utopia for cocktails. (Be sure to try the Marbellini.) The international smart set dress up proper here – making it wonderful for people-watching – and the Marbella Club is still, as it always has been, where they come to play and party. *Doubles from £838 (marbellaclub.com).*



*Loll on glamorous nautical chaises by the pool at Arev St Tropez with frozen rosé to hand*



## AREV ST TROPEZ St Tropez, France

In this maximalist's dream come true, bright and bold colours rule. Take the zingy green of the Bloody Mary avocado cocktail; the deep red of the elegant lift; and the blue-and-white-striped poolside parasols. With such Instagrammable locations, it's no wonder the hotel is dotted with couples taking mirror selfies. And yet, in its intimate and ever so relaxed way, it feels like a private villa (albeit a very glamorous, spoiling one). Start the day with breakfast on the terrace – try eye-catching plates of eggs benedict and fresh mango – then spend the afternoon lolling by the pool or playing padel on Arev's court. Late afternoons are for sauntering through St Tropez for a vanilla flower pastry at Cédric Grolet. And by sunset, the terrace is alive with cosmopolitan types drinking cocktails and sharing tales from Cannes. As the sky turns that famous Riviera blue, dinner is served at The Strand restaurant: say, a feast of Beluga caviar and grilled Rock octopus. But the real romance of Arev is found in the sumptuous suites: floral wallpaper, charming shuttered windows and marshmallow beds with white linen. *Doubles from £495 (arevcollection.com).*

*Time for tapas à deux and a fireside nighcap at Rudi's, the bohemian lounge at the Marbella Club*



## HÔTEL DE TOIRAS Île de Ré, France

Seagulls, laughter, the whirr of bicycle wheels, and boat-riggings chiming in the breeze. In a sun-trap corner of the quayside at Saint-Martin-de-Ré, the Hôtel de Toiras and its all-day brasserie, George's, are windows onto the pageant of an island that's dubbed the '21st arrondissement' for its status as a summer retreat of old-money Parisians. Created 20 years ago from a 17th-century shipowner's house by Olivia Le Calvez, this enchanting boutique hotel is a bolthole from which guests can explore the salt marshes, beaches and oyster cabins via a network of cycle tracks; or hunker down in front of a crackling fire with a novel, a bottle of fine Château Clarisse from the owners' Bordeaux estate and bowls of creamy seafood risotto. Behind the shuttered façade, complete with integrated tower and fluttering flags, the vibe is cosy. Setting the tone is a chic pale-blue lobby leading into a welcoming bar, a pretty salon and courtyard garden. Characterful rooms are named after historical figures. (Prepare to be wowed by the Madame de Sévigné suite with its corona canopy bed and muted silky serenity.) Pampering comes courtesy of the spa at sister property Villa Clarisse, a short stroll away, past boutiques and cottages adorned with hollyhocks. Back at the Toiras terrace, a banquette table always awaits, encouraging languorous cocktails in front of fiery slo-mo sunsets. *Doubles from £270 (hotel-de-toiras.com).* □

*Hôtel de Toiras sits on the harbour of Saint-Martin-de-Ré inside the famous Vauban fortifications*



# Suite talking

*Room with a view too quaint? Looking for something more... presidential? These are the private playgrounds where you could check in for eternity*

TATLER  
AWARD-WINNER  
2025

*Each Grand Suite conjures up the glamour of a different European city – here, the Istanbul suite exudes Turkish opulence with hand-carved wood and embossed leather*

## VENICE SIMPLON-ORIENT-EXPRESS, A BELMOND TRAIN

### *Paris to Venice, and Istanbul*

There's no question, the Grand Suite on this train is a masterpiece. With its gleaming wooden fixtures, hi-spec marble bathroom, exquisite lacquered marquetry and cloud-like double bed, it's richly evocative, turning the best of the old days into something marvellously new. Nowhere compares for atmosphere with the Belmond Orient-Express, where everything seems to take on a glittering sheen; that's down to the fabulous staff's fastidious attention to detail. What you encounter here is magic realism in locomotive form. The champagne's free-flowing, the caviar's

on ice and all you need do is lounge around in your Charvet pyjamas as the train chugs through the Alps, with Gershwin crooning through the speakers. No indulgence has been overlooked, so your immersive time-travel should include plenty of expertly shaken Old Fashions and French 75s served in Lalique glassware (versions of which you should order and take home). Dinner, masterminded by Jean Imbert, is rich, spoiling and all you'd expect on such an illustrious mode of transport – expect lobster, turbot and even more caviar. Afterwards, while the train weaves through hushed towns and villages, what a scene awaits in the Bar Car. Against a backdrop of sapphire-blue, floral-print velvet upholstery,

you can enjoy icy vodka martinis to a soundtrack of jazz classics played on the piano. The following morning, your windows will frame an entirely new view to accompany a basket of Imbert's viennoiserie (the pain au chocolat is a thing of beauty). However, it would be wise to save room, as this is part of a lavish brunch in your sitting room: scrambled eggs crowned with caviar, langoustine ravioli, a glorious tarte tatin and, *naturellement*, more champagne. As for a souvenir of your voyage, the boxed-up piece of original train lacquer is wonderful enough; but the theatrical manner in which it is presented by the liveried staff is bound to make you smile. *Doubles from £3,530 (belmond.com).* ▷



*The Gritti Palace Pisani Palazzo Canal Suite is named after the noble family that once lived in this waterfront palazzo*

## THE GRITTI PALACE, A LUXURY COLLECTION HOTEL

*Venice, Italy*

Just hearing those two words – The Gritti – transports you to old-world, waterside glamour. Nothing disturbs the serenity of this enigmatic institution jutting into the Canalazzo. It offers a spectacular view, particularly if you're standing on the balcony of the Pisani Palazzo Canal Suite. Inside, behold the vases of pale pink blooms in the sitting room. Equally charming are the roses that come with your room-service club sandwich which, whether at 2am or 2pm, is theatrically delivered by a white-jacketed waiter. The suite remains intensely romantic: a riot of silk brocades, with gilded bed-heads and a vast green marble bathroom that could serve as Cleopatra's tomb. Come bellini hour, several European tycoons eye up the top table on the pontoon. There are few culinary experiences that can rival dining on the adjacent terrace of Club del Doge. Try its 'Hemingway-style' risotto, with raw scampi; follow up with chef Alberto Fol's tiramisu, created in a coffee-bean-shaped chocolate shell. *Doubles from £1,062 (marriott.com).*

## ISLAND SHANGRI-LA, HONG KONG

*Admiralty, Hong Kong*

Part concrete jungle, part insurgent wilderness, Hong Kong has spectacular energy. Island Shangri-La offers sumptuous repose. Soaring 56 storeys over Victoria Harbour, it's one of Hong Kong Island's most dizzyingly luxurious hotels. And its new two-bedroom Shangri-La Suite is the zenith of high living: a symphony of silk, onyx and velvet for those with an eye for the exquisite. Arrive to caviar and salmon – a taster from the hotel's Michelin-starred Restaurant Petrus – while your butler pours champagne. Through the window, the sweeping skyscape competes for attention with a vast mural of historic Kowloon inside. With fragrant Acqua di Parma lotions at your fingertips, sink into a bubble bath (thoughtfully drawn for you) in a tub almost large enough for laps, perfectly positioned to soak up the view. Birds flit across hand-painted wallpaper in the master bedroom, which adjoins a dressing room with flattering lighting, cascading jewellery drawers and Tata Harper skincare for that rich-girl glow. The second bedroom can morph into a study, gym or yoga studio – but, with its glamorous sitting room, green marble-topped bar and a chandelier-lit dining room that seats 10, this is a suite designed to dazzle. Work (or working out) can wait. *Doubles from £270 (shangri-la.com).*



*The dining room in Island Shangri-La's new Shangri-La Suite features a solid marble table that looks out on Victoria Harbour*

The vast Penthouse terrace at The Mark was once turned into a private ice rink



## THE MARK

New York, USA

The Mark is very *Bonfire of the Vanities*; if you had to imagine the definitive lair of a Master of the Universe, it would be its fabled Penthouse, officially the largest hotel suite in the USA. Split over two levels, with five bedrooms and six bathrooms, it has a 2,500sqft terrace that overlooks Central Park. As for private dining, order in caviar on ice from Caviar Kaspia while the bellboys hotfoot it from the lobby to the lift to your room, pushing golden trolleys that bear the fruits of your hard day's shopping. (The suites are cream boudoirs with marshmallow-soft beds and deep, deep bathtubs.) The all-day restaurant by Jean-Georges is a fine-dining spectacle, where you can relish crispy salmon sushi and black truffle pizzas. If you need to recalibrate, there are spa therapists on hand, as well as immaculate blowdries at the Frédéric Fekkai Salon. If you want to make an excursion, avail yourself of the in-house chauffeurs; or for lower-key guests, the charming black-and-white bicycles. Truly, nothing here is too much trouble. *Doubles from £998 (themarkhotel.com).*



Filled with antiques and original artworks, Hôtel Plaza Athénée's Royal Suite looks onto the Eiffel Tower

## HÔTEL PLAZA ATHÉNÉE

Paris, France

It doesn't get more sublime than standing on your geranium-adorned balcony, cradling a perfectly chilled glass of Philipponnat Royale réserve rosé, and taking in the nighttime view of the Eiffel Tower from the sprawling silken elegance of the Haute Couture Eiffel Suite. Adorned with such statement design touches as chandeliers and a Steinway, this is a spoiling base for the aesthete longing for comfort and sparkle. Or book into the gilded Royal Suite, the largest suite in Paris, designed by Marie-José Pommereau. Since 1947, the hotel has maintained a close connection with the house of Dior, whose namesake founder showed his first collection here. That bond is manifest in the hotel's Dior spa, where *mesdames qui déjeunent* go for deep-tissue massage and complexion resurrection. The Plaza Athénée is perfect in every detail – especially the food, with superstar chef Jean Imbert in charge. The most lavish option is the turbot: garnished *à la Dieppoise*, studded with shells, expertly de-boned and drizzled with just the right amount of buttery sauce, it alone is worth a trip. But nothing can prepare you for the desserts, which are fit for the court of Versailles, and best enjoyed as room service with a view. *Doubles from £1,375 (dorchestercollection.com).*

TATLER



The Presidential Suite at Hotel Principe di Savoia, whose Pompeii-style pool featured in Sofia Coppola's film 'Somewhere'

## HOTEL PRINCIPE DI SAVOIA

Milan, Italy

To wallow in your own swimming pool beneath a frescoed ceiling – and follow that with a Turkish bath, then tea in your mosaic-ed lounge – feels fabulous. That's the deal at the Presidential Suite of the Principe. Since it opened in 1927, this hotel has been the city's smoothest operator. It's where Edward VIII and Charlie Chaplin took rooms, and where Gianni Agnelli would come for drinks in the bar. Today, it retains its air of ease, grace and sophistication; especially in that suite on the 10th floor, where a riot of wood-panelling and jewel-box velvets add to the sybaritic charms. Downstairs, Acanto is the place for power lunches, with its platters of crudo di scampi and smoked lobster. Don't miss a visit to La Scala: savour the unparalleled access the hotel can arrange, including backstage tours and private boxes. Or blast *Le Nozze di Figaro* through the speakers in your suite: there's nothing like a little Mozart while clocking up laps in your pool. *Doubles from £413 (dorchestercollection.com).* ▷

*The Conservatorium, once a music school, has been transformed into such cossetting bedrooms as the Van Baerle Suite*



## CONSERVATORIUM

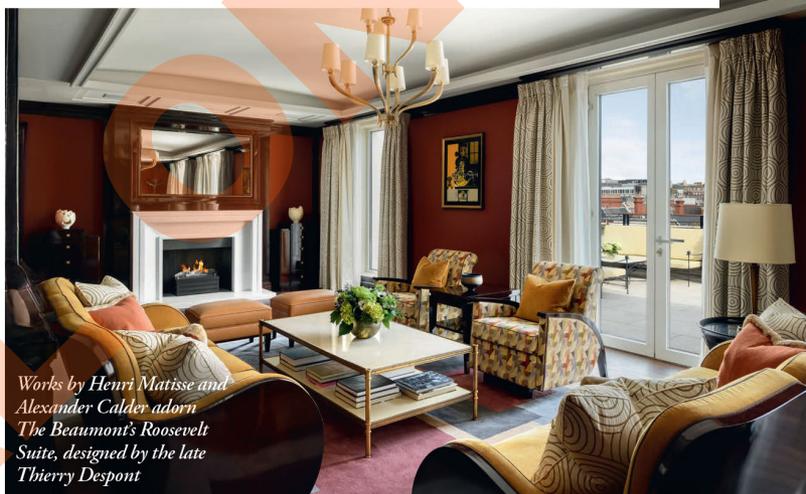
*Amsterdam, Netherlands*

For the urbane urbanite in search of something sleek, this is the haven to bed down in. Cool and modern, light and airy, its Van Baerle Suite – with double-height ceilings and a centrepiece limestone bathtub – is a soothing hideout. Conservatorium started life in 1897 as the Dutch savings bank Rijkspostspaarbank; spot a nod to its history in the door-knockers shaped like a lion's head (the old logo). The protected edifice has been given a new lease of life, expressed in its grand glass atrium, which houses Barbounia restaurant. This place is located in old-money territory – Amsterdam's Upper East Side, if you like – right next to the luxury shopping street P.C. Hoofstraat, so the 'lounge' is where its chic locals come to kick back and relax. There's plenty to interest them inside the hotel's walls, including a cigar shop, a hair salon and a branch of Bonebakker (which has provided jewels to Queen Maxima). Head down dark-wood corridors to Taiko Cuisine to dine on the eight-course omakase – with sake pairings, of course – which features such surprises as creamed fried-rice and meringue sushi. You'll collapse into bed with stomach and heart both full; but not without first appreciating the weather forecast laid on your pillow. It's the little things, after all. *Doubles from £621 (conservatoriumhotel.com).*

## THE BEAUMONT

*London, UK*

Timeless in decoration and grand in proportion, The Beaumont's Roosevelt Suite is an oasis with presence, from its cream lacquer panelling and collection of antique books to its spectacular terrace that overlooks Mayfair. It's so beautifully decorated (and has the most fabulous bathroom, containing a gigantic marble tub and a generous stash of D.R. Harris salts) that you just want to stay put and relish the space, style and old-world kick. Le Magritte Bar & Terrace will eventually call, especially now Antonino's in charge. Previously from Duke's, he makes the iciest martini you can imagine, using Polish vodka frozen to -20 degrees. The staff couldn't be more accommodating – under the new CEO Stuart Procter, they are like genies when it comes to helping you track down a last-minute table at The Colony Grill, where the food and wine is consistently blue-chip. The restaurant excels in elevated comfort food, so expect shrimp cocktail and Dover sole – equally enjoyable on room service up in your suite. *Doubles from £700 (thebeaumont.com).*



*Works by Henri Matisse and Alexander Calder adorn The Beaumont's Roosevelt Suite, designed by the late Thierry Despont*

## ODERA

*Tinos, Greece*

It's mind-blowing to think how near the island of Tinos is to the madness of Mykonos and yet how fantastically far-flung. Here, you can relish the remoteness, especially from the new opening of Odera, where all the signature suites are markedly generous places to spread out and set root. Each comes with a heated pool, perfect for lazing away the day – if only the food at Eos restaurant weren't so tempting. (Octopus carpaccio and rack of lamb in a pistachio crust are just two of the gourmet enticements.) The exteriors, designed by Greek company Studio Bonarchi, aim to mimic

those of a whitewashed Tiniian village; the 54 pool suites all tumble towards the Aegean's crystal waters and the Nosti beach club. The jewel in the hotel's crown is its sprawling two-floor residence. This mega-maisonette feels like a vast private villa, with the additional five-star slickness for which Odera is renowned. The interior is heavy on natural materials, with bedside double doors that open onto the two pools, and vast bathrooms equipped with huge tubs and basins hand-carved from local marble. Elsewhere, the O Wellness Center is all-holistic and quietly spoiling, with a Zerobody Dry Float, Barbara Sturm facials and a memorable hot-stone massage. The concierge staff are exceptional, helping you book a table in the Chorefra Taverna. It's the most picturesque spot on the island – aside from the alluring environs of your suite. There, you're perfectly positioned to watch the sky turn electric-blue at dusk. *Doubles from £299 (oderatinos.com).* □



*Swim into the dramatic shared pool from your Junior Suite at Odera, designed in natural Tiniian stone*

# Riding high

*The whinnying formula: saddle up for an equestrian break at these rural retreats*

*For group hacks or equine therapy, Lucknam Park is Britain's leading horse-lovers' hotel*

## LUCKNAM PARK

*Wiltshire, UK*

There's more than a flirtation with Austen-stately style at Lucknam Park and the whole place whispers serenity – even when it's full over the weekend of the Badminton Horse Trials. There's plenty of chintz in the bedrooms and dreamy drapery on the four-posters; chesterfields and antique books in the library; and a statement chandelier in the dining room, where chef Hywel Jones does miraculous things with scallops and racks of lamb, followed by a cheese trolley that features some potent Stiltons. And food has never tasted as good as it does following a half-day hack; especially when you can kick back on the terrace of the new Walled Garden Restaurant. What could be more beautiful than riding through the Wiltshire countryside on a sunny day? Trotting past banks of cowslip, while horses in a nearby paddock gallop towards you; then cantering down a magnificent drive of soaring lime and beech trees. Decompression happens effortlessly here, but if you want to get rid of deep-seated angst, try some rightly billed 'transformative' equine therapy. Or hole up in one of the cottages overlooking the paddock, complete with the soul-soothing neighing of its residents. *Doubles from £295 (lucknampark.co.uk).*

## FINCA LA DONAIRA

*Andalucía, Spain*

In the Serranía de Ronda lies Arcadia; a roaming 1,700-acre biodynamic farm. And at its very heart is La Donaira farmstead, a whitewashed building transformed into an agriturismo paradise. This is a place of craggy wooden beams, trough-like sinks, shaggy rugs and sun-bleached clay tiles. With its picture-book windows, wicker chairs and wreaths of dried flowers, La Donaira transcends any notion of 'shabby chic'. Its raison d'être is the 80 or so Lusitanos bred here and trained according to the principles of 'natural horsemanship'. Not forgetting 14 largely white donkeys – endangered Andalusians – who patrol the fields. Head out for a hack or try forest bathing with the donkeys. Either way, you'll see grazing animals, beehives, vines, olive and almond groves. Almost everything edible is produced on-site: from cabbage tart drizzled in balsamic vinegar to goose sausages and fried guinea fowl, all the dishes are complemented by natural wines from the estate. Just beneath the hotel is a medicinal garden; there's also a spring-fed pool as well as the spa: an architectural marvel, with an ice-cold plunge pool and a wood-fired sauna. It's heartbreakingly beautiful. Wild horses couldn't drag you away. *Doubles from £812, full board (ladonaira.com).*



*From the saddle to a the spring-fed pool, La Donaira is all about contact with nature and animals*

## UGA ULAGALLA

*Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka*

Rolex and Roxy, a skewbald and a dapple grey, are two of the many attractions of Uga Ulagalla, a 58-acre estate surrounding a 150-year-old pillared mansion built in the 'traditional aristocratic' style. And taking them in rein, one picturesque hack is to a nearby lotus-adorned reservoir, humming with endemic birds, its water the perfect depth for the horses to plunge in for a refreshing splash. Horses aren't the only animals at Ulagalla: elephants are monitored in the wild by a research team, which also chronicles other fauna, from the Ruddy mongoose to the Eurasian otter. And a troop of swinging monkeys can even be admired from your luxurious private villa, cocooned in nature, with a cooling pool. As for the gastronomic offering, it really is superb. Choose from Liyawela, an à la carte restaurant on the manor-house's upper deck – be sure to sample the prawn red curry or chilli crab – or Kamatha, serving native dishes beneath a banyan tree by the paddy fields. Ulagalla is perfectly positioned to visit the island's so-called 'cultural triangle'. So, go forth and explore. You'll be even more thrilled when you return from a day out. *Ambercrombie & Kent* ([ambercrombiekent.co.uk](http://ambercrombiekent.co.uk)) offers seven nights from £2,495, including breakfast, flights and transfers.

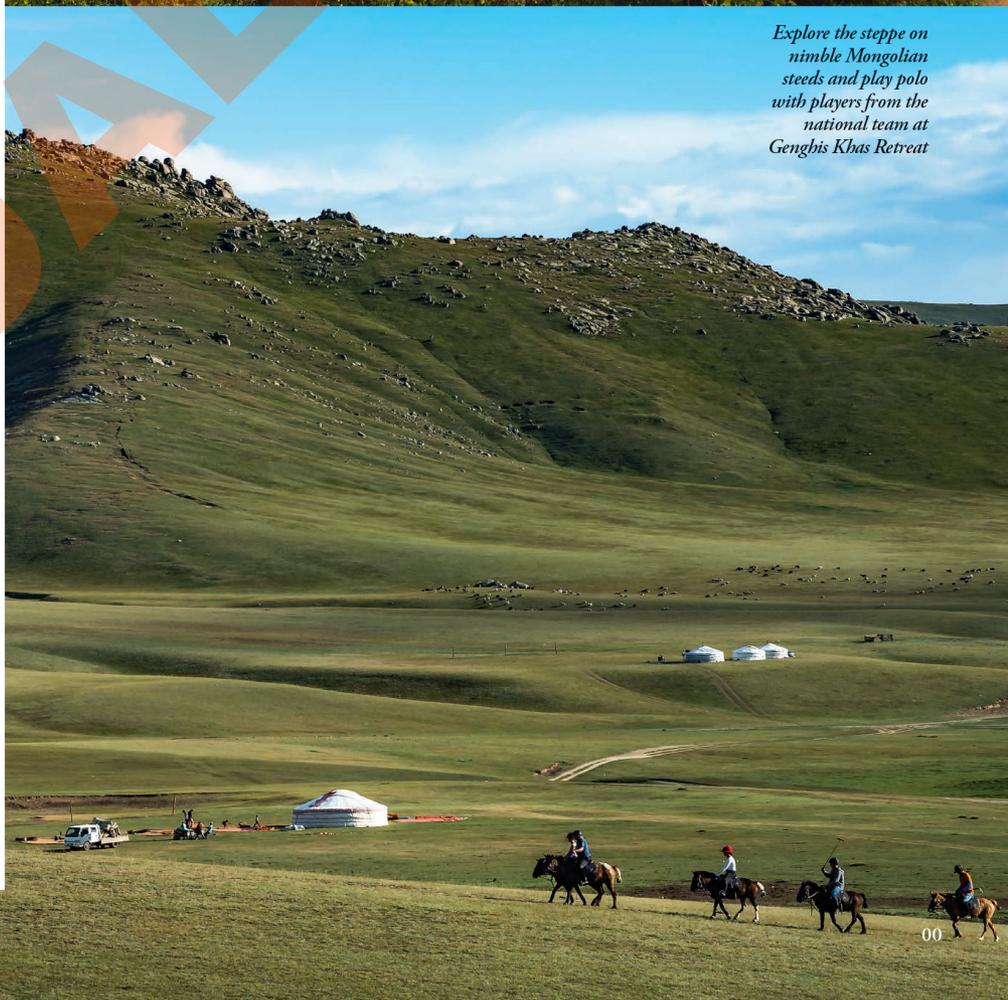


*Secluded eco-villas with private pools at Uga Ulagalla are scattered across 58 acres of remote gardens*

## GENGHIS KHAN RETREAT

*Orkhon Valley, Mongolia*

It's wildly remote, 60km from the nearest road and five dusty hours from Ulaanbaatar (or a lot faster by private plane). But what an adventure, riding out on the vast, fenceless steppe and immersing yourself in unfettered nomadic life. Every summer, this cluster of white *ger* tents appears like a mirage, leaving no trace when it disbands. Your host is D'Artagnan Gierke, an Old Harrovian full of soft-spoken charm who makes sure everyone has the best time. Polo is the house sport – it was D'Artagnan's father who revived Mongolia's polo traditions, teaching a new generation the sport Genghis Khan used to drill his armies. Stick and ball with players from the national team – or slow the pace with massages, yoga and realignment with the resident shaman. The riding is mind-blowing: gallop alongside wild ponies, crash through rivers and picnic above valleys of wildflowers; all thrilling views one minute, calm contemplation the next. Return to camp for candlelit suppers and piano recitals that segue into spontaneous parties. As stars blaze, snuggle under cashmere blankets in your *ger*, or stay up late sharing vodka shots and revelling in a vanishing but still vigorous way of life. *Six nights from £3,200, full board* ([genghiskhanretreat.com](http://genghiskhanretreat.com)). □



*Explore the steppe on nimble Mongolian steeds and play polo with players from the national team at Genghis Khan Retreat*

*Maxx Royal Bodrum Resort has an outpost of Mykonos's Scorpios for adults and a kids' club that stays open until 2am*



# Bratler

*Mini VIPs may be hardest to please, but they're no challenge for these all-age crowd-pleasers*

## MAXX ROYAL BODRUM RESORT Bodrum, Turkey

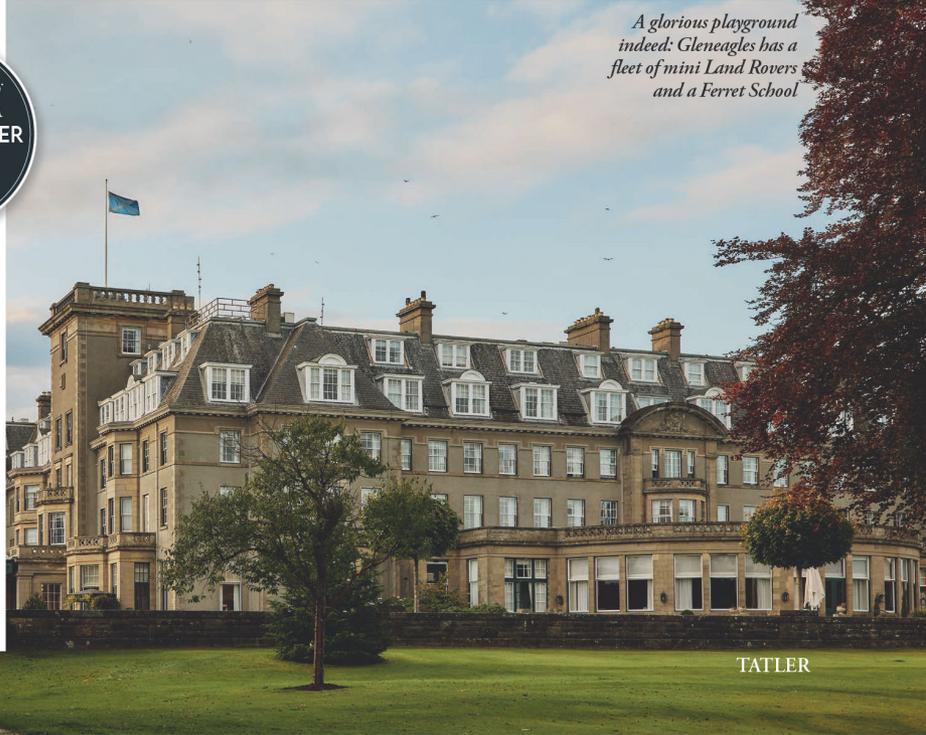
Unwilling to change your holiday style while travelling *en famille*? Well, this one's for you. Just ask Naomi Campbell, who was here last summer with her brood. Here, excess comes as standard: from caviar to Cristal, via cryotherapy and crèches. Little wonder it's a playground for media moguls, oil tycoons and oligarchs wanting to switch off with their families on the most dazzling swathe of the Bodrum peninsula. The resort's 282 suites and villas, some with vast terraces swathed in foliage, are peppered across a steep hillside that runs down to the Aegean. When their neon-turquoise pools come aglow at night, you feel like you could be in West Hollywood. It would be rude not to dine at Caviar Kaspia: its divine crab salads, smoked salmon blinis and jacket potatoes piled high with caviar will appeal to even the most precocious palette. *Doubles from £750, including breakfast (maxxroyal.com).*

## GLENEAGLES Perthshire, UK

Within minutes of arriving, you'll understand why this illustrious hotel is fondly known as the 'Glorious Playground'. Celebrating its 100th anniversary, Gleneagles remains the place for golf and grouse. Except now, it has the added glamour of Sharan Pasricha and his wife, Eiesha, in charge, who have breathed fresh energy into this Scottish landmark. Children can partake in the ultimate treasure hunt across the estate with an Adventure Guide; for this, they'll need to be fuelled by the hotel's legendary breakfast. (There are three different types of smoked salmon and nine kinds of freshly mixed juices – not forgetting the Bloody Mary section – and that's before you've even looked at the à la carte menu.) Dinner at The Strathearn – oysters, caviar and plenty of champagne popping – is what parents' school-holiday dreams are made of. Equally enchanting for children is the theatrical finale of Crêpes Suzette. *Doubles from £575, including breakfast (gleneagles.com).* ▷



*A glorious playground indeed: Gleneagles has a fleet of mini Land Rovers and a Ferret School*



## JUMBY BAY ISLAND

### *Antigua, Caribbean*

About two miles north of Antigua, Jumby Bay is in a golden league of its own. This is a pure tropical island paradise with all the creature comforts and delicacies you could imagine. It's a place where Taittinger and spiced rum punch are both on tap; where guests lounge most languorously by any of a multitude of pools. Children will be richly entertained, whether snorkelling or (naturally) playing pirates of the Caribbean. Guests in the private villas on the oceanfront have included Bill Gates, Justin Bieber and Lionel Messi. Join them in back-to-back water sports; circumnavigate the island on a tour; or limit your daily exertion to visiting the spa, with its yoga platform, sauna and steam room. Dine in the Estate House, a grand 1930s plantation mansion, decorated with pineapples and on the inside with tropical plant murals. If that's not sweet enough, at Jumby they have a soufflé of the day. Every day. Beat that. *Elegant Resorts* ([elegantresorts.co.uk](http://elegantresorts.co.uk)) offers seven nights from £8,105, full board, including flights and transfers.



*Multi-generational fun is on the menu at Jumby Bay Island – where 'jumbee' means 'playful spirit' in Antiguan*



## CHEWTON GLEN

### *New Forest, UK*

It's said that Chewton Glen is where the UK mini-break began; where a three-day stint of lazy lie-ins and heavenly cocktails sipped on shimmering green lawns was invented. The legendary New Forest hotel was the first-ever British member of the illustrious Relais & Châteaux group and remains a bastion of characterful elegance, whether you're ensconced in the cosy main building or the storybook treehouses. For yet more seclusion and space, The Yews is every child's (and adult's) dream: think hot tubs, breakfast hampers waiting at your door when you wake, and a concierge on standby. There are also two pools: an outdoor number that's dreamy come rain or shine, and a stately indoor affair at the heart of the spa. Fancy a massage and body scrub using Chewton's signature cedar and blackberry oils? Or maybe falconry or axe-throwing is more your thing... Don't miss a highlight: walking teddy-bear sheep round the beautiful grounds is guaranteed to conjure huge smiles. The Dining Room excels in elevated classics (think dressed Devon crab with pickled radish, caviar and celeriac); the less formal Kitchen by James Martin has a great atmosphere: the fish pie is an any-age crowd-pleaser. *Doubles from £405, including breakfast* ([relaischateaux.com](http://relaischateaux.com)). ▷

*Wake up to find a breakfast hamper with croissants, smoked salmon and sourdough on the doorstep of your Chewton Glen treehouse*

**CONSTANCE BELLE MARE PLAGE**

*Poste de Flacq, Mauritius*

Glamour and young children are paradoxical. But this tropical resort blends both seamlessly for an idyllic escape. Located on the island's north-east coast, this resort spans two kilometres of white sand, with swaying palm trees behind and picturesque boat scenes ahead. Relaxation is delivered in a variety of ways: there are four pools – including one that's adults-only, to enjoy while the children live it up at the Kids' Club – as well as a diving centre, tennis courts and two golf courses. There are also eight elegant restaurants to shimmy between, including the Blue Penny Cellar, which houses around 35,000 bottles of wine. Then there's the sweet spot: the spa. Encased by lush flora, the resort's inner sanctum offers treatments using regional ingredients such as ylang ylang and lemongrass, expertly executed with local, Thai, Balinese and western techniques. As for your offspring, treat them to the thoughtfully curated Kids' Spa menu, which offers facials, massages and mani-pedis. *Doubles from £273, including breakfast (constancehotels.com).*



*Relax in the spa after a family swim through a shipwreck off the shore of Constance Belle Mare Plage*



*Little VIPs can follow in the footsteps of G7 world leaders – and enter a fairytale landscape at Schloss Elmau*

**SCHLOSS ELMAU**

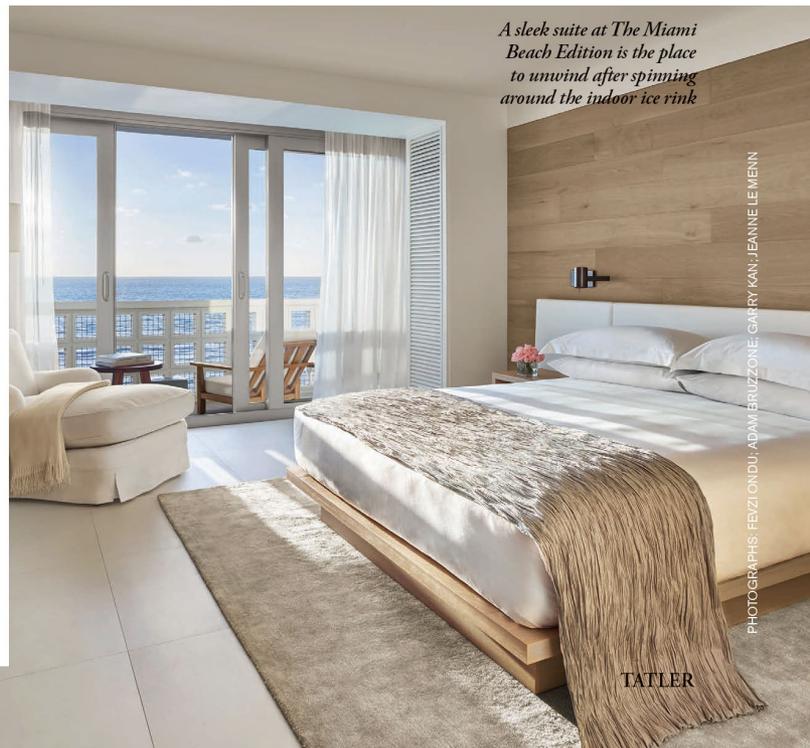
*Bavaria, Germany*

Close up, Schloss Elmau is even more impressive than in pictures, and its appeal is multi-generational. Though there's a fabulous kids' club, the real magic is outside, in a forested landscape which feels plucked from the imagination of the Brothers Grimm. Families should make for the Retreat, whose glass-fronted garden suites give views of the Wetterstein mountains. From there, it's mere steps to the nature pool, playgrounds and tennis courts. Then there are the numerous hiking and biking trails. By winter, there's cross-country skiing through the silent, evergreen-scented woods. Come summer, you'll find adults and offspring alike happily leaping into an icy and invigorating stream after a spell in the outdoor sauna (whose jewel-toned robes and playful slippers are thoughtful touches for little VIPs). Otherwise, visit the bookshop, then cosy up with a slice of poppy-seed cake in one of the elegant drawing rooms with their flickering fires. You'll see why families return year on year, simply to experience this extraordinary place where culture, nature and wellness collide. *Healing Holidays (healingholidays.com) offers five nights from £4,399 for a family of four, including breakfast and transfers.*

**THE MIAMI BEACH EDITION**

*Florida, USA*

Miami Beach morphs as desired. It's for children of all ages (not least, eternal Peter Pans). And on Collins Avenue, the ocean road that runs alongside, there's everything that could be desired, including the fabulous luxury that begins in the Edition's Le Labo-scented lobby. Beloved by Madonna and her family, as well as Lindsay Lohan and the Art Basel crowd, it's the perfect hangout for the MTV set. The bungalow rooms face out onto a 1950s diving platform on which the singer Janelle Monáe has performed, and onto the beach. And the aesthetic is familiar to Edition lovers: creams, whites and sweeping lines that make minimalism feel warm. Outside, there's a rare kind of wildlife attraction: a mammoth iguana that once caused a Premier League footballer and his clique to spill their champagne in shock. Otherwise, avail yourself of two calm and sultry pools, populated with sun-burnished bodies (and VIP cabanas if you want extra privacy). Kids will love the indoor bowling alley and ice rink which, after 8pm, are for adults only. And then it's time for French 75s and margaritas in the dark and sexy Matador Bar. All that's left is dinner: Jean-Georges Vongerichten's Matador Room is the perfect solution. The kampachi crudo and arroz con pollo are A-list heaven. *Doubles from £327 (editionhotels.com).*



*A sleek suite at The Miami Beach Edition is the place to unwind after spinning around the indoor ice rink*

PHOTOGRAPHS: FEZI ONDU, ADAM BRUZZONE, GARRY KAN, JEANNE LE WENN

TATLER

## PARKLANE, A LUXURY COLLECTION RESORT & SPA

### *Limassol, Cyprus*

The lapping Mediterranean Sea is the tranquil soundtrack at Parklane. Nestled on a stretch of beach and wrapped-round by mountains, this quietly luxurious resort and spa invites well-heeled travellers to surrender to spoiling as soon as they enter the serene, soaring atrium. Dining options range from a smart sushi bar with sunset views to a Cypriot taverna – and a breakfast buffet that has to be seen to be believed. The Explorers Kids' Club boasts a two-storey castle and pirate-themed grounds with water slides. Here, a dedicated team dotes on your little buccaneers from the moment they step through the door, and will keep you updated on WhatsApp through the day so you can scope out the three outdoor pools, stroll the landscaped gardens or drop into the on-site designer boutiques. Or spend an indulgent afternoon in the Kalloni spa, which makes full use of its proximity to the sea, both in its treatments and in the full-height windows that draw your gaze to the waves. At Parklane, peace of mind awaits at every turn. *Scott Dunn (scottdunn.com) offers four nights from £3,100 for one adult and child, half board, including flights and transfers.*



*The Kalloni spa at Parklane awaits while the offspring are under supervision in the Explorers Kids' Club*



## BIJAL

### *Antalya, Turkey*

This is a sprightly newcomer to Antalya's coast, its 19 airy villas – ranging from one-beds with dreamy outdoor baths to four-beds with plenty of living space – buried among pine forest near the ancient town of Side. With the ethos here being 'play', thoughtful extras are laid on; say, the complimentary polaroid-type cameras for snapping holiday memories, or the sunshine-yellow bicycles for a spin down to the beach, where you'll find the kids' club. (Catering for newborns to 12-year-olds, it offers crafts, pizza making and themed days, be they pirate or superhero.) For grown-ups seeking ludic languor, there are painting and pottery classes, volleyball and water sports; in downtime, they can nab a secluded beach cabana for lunch, or indeed an afternoon siesta. Ever-obliging butlers whizz guests around the resort by golf buggy – everything's within strolling distance but it is far more fun this way – and popular destinations include the three restaurants: the Beachhouse (for seafood), the Clubhouse (Mediterranean) or Teppanyaki for Japanese. At the two larger villas, staff can rustle up a private barbecue or dinner – so all you need to do is gather the family. *Doubles from £749, including breakfast (bijal.com.tr).* □

*A four-bedroom villa at Bijal comes with a dedicated butler service and complimentary polaroid-style cameras*

A photograph of a luxurious cruise ship suite. The view is from a curved hallway with a white marble floor and dark wood trim. On either side of the hallway are white cabinets with dark wood tops, each holding a blue and gold decorative vase. The hallway leads to a dining area with a round table, a chair, and a window with sheer curtains. A modern chandelier hangs from the ceiling. The overall aesthetic is elegant and sophisticated.

# *The suite life*

*Epitomising luxury at sea, Cunard's Queens and Princess Grill Suites are more like serene private residences than cabins, where opulent accommodation, personal butler service and fine dining abounds*

**THE NAME CUNARD HAS LONG** been synonymous with the most glamorous ocean voyages. Founded by Sir Samuel Cunard in a bid to create reliable transatlantic travel, the Cunard Line established the first regularly scheduled steamship link between the United Kingdom and the United States. Since then, it's become the name to know in high-end cruise travel, transporting rock stars and royalty – from Audrey Hepburn and Elizabeth Taylor to Ed Sheeran – aboard its ever-evolving fleet of luxurious ships.



*These sprawling spaces not only offer opulent decor and amenities, but also special privileges and experiences*



One of the best things about Cunard is that it manages to unite old-world glamour with the latest in five-star travel. Nowhere is this more evident than in the sought-after Grills Suites, the most luxurious accommodation option offered on board. These sprawling spaces not only offer opulent decor and amenities, but also special privileges and experiences only offered to guests of this superior suite category.

This begins with priority boarding for the most seamless service that's reminiscent of first-class air travel. A personal butler will look after your every wish and whim throughout your voyage, while the wisdom of a concierge service delivers tailored itineraries, curating the best activities both on and off the ship.

This is a world in which luxury is defined by each individual guest, all of whom enjoy the freedom to do as much or as little as they like. Special touches abound, from a pillow menu in your bedroom for the perfect night's sleep for the duration of your trip to the chef in a Grills restaurant whipping you up any pudding you fancy – even if it's not on the menu. Access to private open-deck spaces mean Grills guests can relax and sunbathe in peace – and there are



even exclusive Grills hot tubs on board *Queen Anne* and *Queen Mary 2*.

The style and sophistication reaches its peak within the top-tier Queens Grill Suites themselves; arriving at them feels rather like 'turning left' when you board a plane. Think: bathrooms clad in marble, a complimentary minibar stocked with handpicked spirits, and

personalised gifts left waiting for you. Every element is well-considered, from the carefully chosen furnishings to the eye-catching art, all creating a rich tapestry of colours and textures to make you feel at home. Days might end watching the sunset from your private balcony while your butler serves drinks and canapés before dinner, with you eventually collapsing onto your sumptuous Cunarder mattress, wrapped in crisp, soft linens and topped with pillows that can be chosen from a dedicated menu.

All in all, privacy, space and exceptional service combine in Cunard's Grills Suites. Even the name itself has an auspicious connection, dating back to the start of the 20th century, when the HAPAG liner *Deutschland* opened an extra tariff restaurant specialising in grilled meats. Just over a decade later, Cunard opened

its first Grill Room presenting an intimate dining experience for first-class passengers.

Over the years, the concept evolved to offer a club-like ambience with highly attentive service, and a more private space than the main dining room, making it popular with stars of the stage and screen. Grills Suites are the newest iteration of these exclusive spaces, bringing the golden age of travel into the modern day.



*The Grills Suites offer guests a more personalised cruise experience*

TATLER  
AWARD-WINNER  
2025

Commissioned by King Mohammed VI, the Royal Mansour has an exclusive, oasis-like pool surrounded by sun loungers and cabanas for privacy

## ROYAL MANSOUR Marrakech, Morocco

Behold a hotel that doubles as a fantastical medina in the heart of the Red City; albeit of the most palatial kind amid fountain-studded courtyards and arches of orange blossom, pruned to perfection. Moorish grandeur reigns supreme here. Would you expect any less from the King of Morocco, who commissioned its creation? (This year he's also opened Royal Mansours in Tamuda Bay and Casablanca.) The property is an enclave of beautifully designed individual riads, with rooftop terraces and breathtaking views of the Atlas mountains best savoured over breakfast. By night, you wind through pink-sandstone alleyways lined with soaring palm trees to a palatial building housing such restaurants as the recently opened Hélène Darroze La Grande Brasserie, which revels in gilt and glamour, with heavy drapes and satins in jewel tones. However, it's the pristine white spa, set in fragrant gardens straight from *The Arabian Nights*, that steals the show with a salon for lavish hair treatments that thicken and re-gloss. But it's being led to the marble hammam, for a time-honoured ritual that leaves your body as soft as butter and your mind blissfully blank, that feels truly by royal appointment. *Doubles from £900 (royalmansour.com).*

# High society

Indulge in VIP treatment at these silk-swagged homes from home for royals, aristocrats, statesmen and starlets

The Carlyle treats guests to monogrammed pillowcases, with more than 1,200 sets embroidered each year

## HOTEL GRAND BRETAGNE, A LUXURY COLLECTION HOTEL

Athens, Greece

Rejoice! There are two great anniversaries for philhellènes to celebrate in Athens this year. First, it's 200 years since Lord Byron died while campaigning to free Greece from the Ottoman yoke. (And at the city's Benaki Museum, a portrait lent by the British ambassador shows exactly why the Old Harrovian was able to cut such a swashbuckling swathe through Europe.) More hedonistic yet, it's 150 years since the Greek capital's most haute-luxe hotel, the Grande Bretagne, opened its doors. Draw back the swagged curtains in your suite, and you'll immediately bag one key point in Greece's feted Sacred Triangle: shimmering atop the Acropolis since 432 BC is the Parthenon. The other two are the temples of Aphaia in Aegina and of Poseidon in Sounion; but why leave the vicinity? Oozing classical restraint, the hotel sits on Syntagma Square; and this fabled grande dame of impeccable taste really has seen it all, including Brigitte Bardot motorcycling down its stairway. Imbibe its magic over tea in the Winter Garden or martinis at the rooftop bar, or by enjoying the impressive welcome present of a white-chocolate caryatid in the silky finery of your room. *Doubles from £401 (marriott.com).*

## THE CARLYLE, A ROSEWOOD HOTEL New York, USA

Synonymous with timeless charm and glamour, the Carlyle deserves its reputation as matriarch of the Upper East Side. The then-Duke and Duchess of Cambridge stayed here for their first visit to New York in 2014 – it was also a favourite of the duke's mother, Diana, Princess of Wales – and US presidents John F Kennedy and Ronald Reagan called it their 'unofficial New York home'. The hotel's golden, italicised name over the swing doors is as chic as the gleaming marble lobby and yellow velvet sofas; the suites in the 35-storey building are the epitome of comfort, with king-sized beds, sitting rooms with fresh flowers and writing desks overlooking Madison Avenue. Here, the pillowcases are actually embroidered with your initials – because it's all in the details. And the location: flanking the hotel are designer boutiques, and it's just a 10-minute walk to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Another star billing is Bemelmans Bar – Liza Minnelli and Billy Joel have both performed here. What better way to wind down than by listening to jazz and piano over a glass of delicious pinot noir and lobster tacos? *Doubles from £688 (rosewoodhotels.com).*





*The Hyde Park Suite at The Dorchester, a hotel that has long had royal associations and now displays King Charles III's art*

## THE DORCHESTER

*London, UK*

At this institution, palatial grandeur meets First Lady splendour in an electric mix of old-world glamour and gleaming-new opulence. For decades, it has been a favourite of royalty – including the young Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret, not to mention King Charles III – and His Majesty's sketches hang in various suites (these have also been recently made-over to look even more sleek and quietly gorgeous, and each is provided with a dedicated butler). There's a memorable violet-infused champagne cocktail to be had at The Promenade, where charming manager Sandro makes you feel as effervescent as the chilled Veuve Clicquot that flows so freely in his domain. Then there's the Vesper Bar, an ode to the hotel's 1930s heyday, where Cecil Beaton illustrations hang on the walls. Another speciality of this little patch of Park Lane paradise is the Scottish scallops in citrus beurre blanc, sprinkled with Kristal caviar, native lobster, artichoke, shiso and Périgord truffle at the Alain Ducasse restaurant. Truly, nothing here is too much. And that's all down to its unflappable GM, Luca Virgilio, whose impeccable taste and style ensure The Dorchester's magic spell is truly never broken. *Doubles from £880 (dorchestercollection.com).*

*Hotel Grand Bretagne became Greece's first electrified hotel with private bathrooms in 1874 and thus became a haven for royalty*



## THE CAVENDISH HOTEL

*Derbyshire, UK*

Soul-warmingly comfortable and a gentle stroll through gorgeous parkland to Chatsworth House (the Devonshires' impossibly grand palace), The Cavendish at Baslow is a treat. Its recent revamp – courtesy of Nicola Harding, in cahoots with Laura Burlington, daughter-in-law of the current duke and now Chatsworth's chatelaine – is pretty, witty and absolutely on point. Delicate wallpapers above the dado rails and green baize doors lead into suites with old-fashioned bedside telephones, canopied four-posters and an elegant restraint (that thankfully doesn't extend to the luxurious bed linen or the deep baths). There's art everywhere, plucked from the family's collection: from a ravishing Elisabeth Frink *Red Dog* to a painting by Debo Devonshire's sister Nancy Mitford of their childhood home. The Chatsworth Estate bought the original coaching inn in the 1830s and, in 1970, rebuilt it as The Cavendish. Guests are offered tours of Chatsworth and the chance to go fly-fishing. The food is terrific: Ladybower trout, estate lamb, and a strawberry soufflé from heaven were winners in The Gallery restaurant. As it has for centuries, this quarrystone building continues to give travellers a good time. *Doubles from £200 (cavendishhotelbaslow.co.uk).* □

*Wake up to expansive views of the Chatsworth parkland from the Splendid Suite at The Cavendish Hotel*



# Metro marvels

*Book in for fashion week or the polo season, for a historical tour or glamorous getaway: these city hotels are the quintessence of chic*



*Kit Kemp's signature maximalist flourishes enliven a Junior Terrace Suite at Warren Street Hotel*

## WARREN STREET HOTEL

*New York, USA*

Sweep over Brooklyn Bridge, down into the jagged glint of Manhattan and you'll soon be in Tribeca, that super prime cut of New York that is home to Jay Z and Beyoncé, Taylor Swift, Robert de Niro and so many more of the city's Made Its. And look, there's a chalkboard sign outside the bright blue façade of the neighbourhood's vibrant new Warren Street Hotel – from Tim and Kit Kemp's stable, Firmdale – which announces: 'Jazz night every Thursday.' But it's not just the gig that draws the quarter's resident *riche* and hotel guests alike. It's also the luxurious eclecticism, and the clash and clang of colours, serenaded by waves of bossa nova. In the drawing room there are gemstone lamps and wooden figurines, geometric chairs, a chess table and a copy of Bret Easton Ellis's *Glamorama*; in the orangerie are ceramics by Martha Freud; and the lobby is populated by big sculptures that seem to bellow 'Welcome to New York'. Here, the suites are flooded with light from floor-to-ceiling windows that prove you really are in the middle of the concrete jungle (the twinkling One World Trade Center is your neighbour in this hood). And their design narrative is bright and unique, with all boasting impressively upholstered headboards. Vinyls, stacked up ready to play, are a history of zeitgeist: Swift's *Lover*, *Abbey Road*, *True Blue*. And at ground level, the Hudson is barely a block away. The dining room downstairs feels old school, offering a total white-tablecloth treat for breakfast – order a well-stuffed omelette – and dinner is a romance. While oysters and champagne might be followed by a creamy Dover sole here, that life-changing fish can also be brought to your room. Which begs the question: do you ever really have to leave it? *Doubles from £607 (firmdalehotels.com).*

*Are you on board? The deck-like outdoor terrace of the Park Hyatt's Sydney Suite*



## PARK HYATT SYDNEY

*Sydney, Australia*

The joy of Sydney is in its dramatic location on the jagged mouth of the Parramatta River. Nowhere takes better advantage of this than the Park Hyatt hotel, crouching below the Harbour Bridge and giving sensational views of the Opera House. There's nowhere more exciting to wake up than in one of its 155 rooms and suites, almost all of which have floor-to-ceiling windows and balconies. Although part of the Hyatt chain, this place has a distinctive character, thanks to its status as a landmark of the buzzing quayside walkway that connects the ferry terminals to the bridge – and it's impressive. Rooms are spacious, and benefit from a clever configuration that uses moving screens to divide sleeping areas from bathrooms; and with its rooftop pool, the building feels like a permanently moored cruise ship. The Dining Room under chef James Viles has an exceptional menu that champions the best Australian produce, while all-day eating is available in a more casual area off the lobby: a perfect place for people-watching. With so many of the city's attractions on the doorstep, you'll feel obliged to drag yourself away at some point. *Doubles from £683, including breakfast (hyatt.com).*

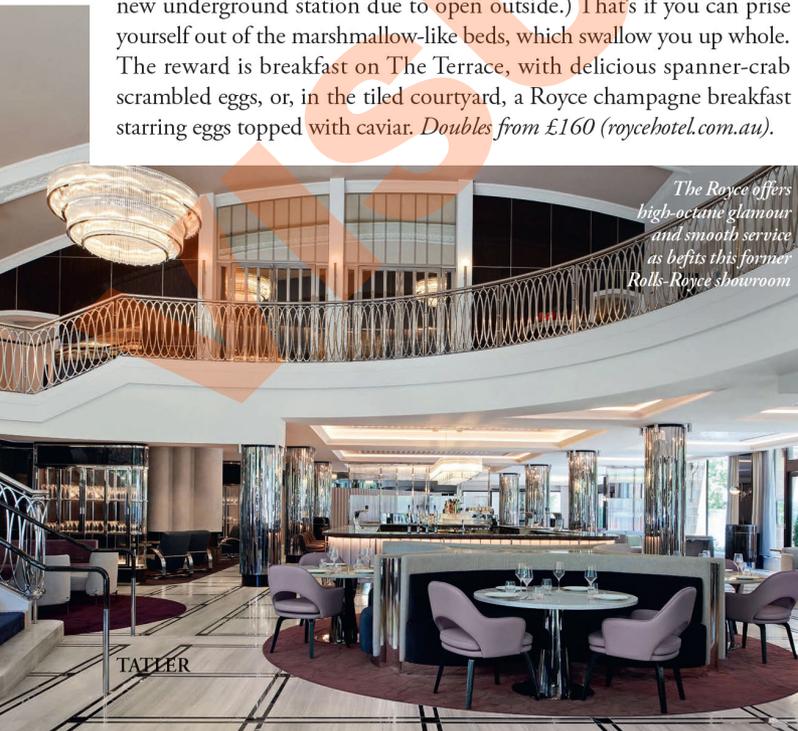


Settle into the library at De L'Europe with a book, a game of chess or a drink from the bar

## THE ROYCE

### Melbourne, Australia

Five-star hotels are surprisingly scarce in Melbourne, given the city's sophistication. But the newly refurbished Royce in St Kilda Road – named after the Rolls-Royces that graced the showroom once housed in this art deco building – has the ingredients to make it Melbourne's very own Spirit of Ecstasy. The bar is a mirrored and chrome stage-set where Jay Gatsby would look very much at home, and its martinis are the best in town. The 1920s theme continues upstairs, where rooms and suites feature such period details as ribbed and mirrored walls, curved white cocktail cabinets, chrome light fittings and frosted chandeliers. Murals depicting brightly plumed birds add colour to an otherwise muted monochrome palette. If you book a Royce Suite, you'll have a palatial room with commanding views over downtown. But do take to the streets to explore the artsy St Kilda quarter and its Botanic Gardens. (Soon you'll be able to hop on a tube from the new underground station due to open outside.) That's if you can prise yourself out of the marshmallow-like beds, which swallow you up whole. The reward is breakfast on The Terrace, with delicious spanner-crab scrambled eggs, or, in the tiled courtyard, a Royce champagne breakfast starring eggs topped with caviar. *Doubles from £160 (roycehotel.com.au).*

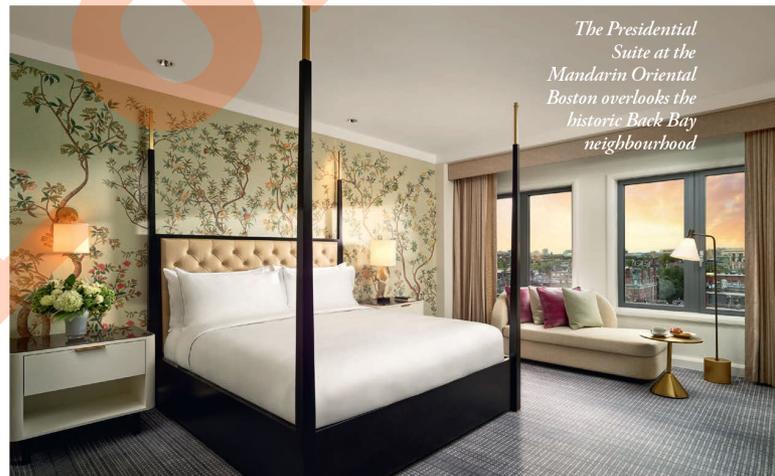


The Royce offers high-octane glamour and smooth service as befits this former Rolls-Royce showroom

## DE L'EUROPE

### Amsterdam, Netherlands

There aren't many hotels that can boast their home cities were built around them. Then again, De L'Europe is in its own realm of refinement. On the banks of the Amstel River, it occupies the site of a 15th-century fortress, and its location is the envy of all who pass by – as you'll notice over dinner at Marie, looking out over the water, if you're not transfixed by the Côte d'Azur cuisine which includes sea urchin and truffle gnocchi. You'll probably be more intent on the fare at the Flore restaurant, which Michelin has awarded two stars, as well as a green one for sustainability. Whatever your choice, be sure to drop by Freddy's bar for a drink: if not an ice-cold Heineken – the hotel has been owned by the brewing dynasty since the 1950s – then a Royal Palace, a stroopwafel-spin on an espresso martini. The gilded lobby is a cool place to while away the hours, with live jazz performed every Saturday. And though this is old-world luxury, the new wing feels remarkably fresh. Here, local creatives have been commissioned to make a suite their own, offering guests an exclusive experience. (A fan of Bibi van der Velden? The jewellery designer's suite comes with a trove of pieces to be worn throughout your stay.) Therein lies the secret of Amsterdam's only family-owned luxury hotel: the personal touch. *Doubles from £703, including breakfast (deleurope.com).*



The Presidential Suite at the Mandarin Oriental Boston overlooks the historic Back Bay neighbourhood

## MANDARIN ORIENTAL BOSTON

### Boston, USA

Occasionally, travellers discover a place which offers so much to see and do that even a lengthy stay doesn't seem nearly enough. With its historic architecture and thriving arts and restaurant scenes, not to mention its famous universities, Boston is one such city. This is the place to base yourself if you are sending your offspring to Harvard or other Ivy League universities, as it's smack-bang in the middle of the action, with a concierge whose finger is on the pulse. Located on Boylston Street, the hotel is a short hop from the bespoke boutiques of Newbury Street, a stroll from the verdant Boston Common – where you can skate on the frozen pond in winter – and a warm-up jog from the beautiful Charles River path, where you can join fitness-fanatic Bostonians preparing for their annual marathon. Return to sublime rooms with views of the old-world charms of Back Bay and beds so comfortable that even the most jetlagged traveller will sleep soundly. The fourth-floor spa, with its vitality pool and crystal steam room, maintains the MO's reputation for detail. Re-energised, head to dinner at Ramsay's Kitchen by Gordon Ramsay: buzzing and justifiably so. The signature beef Wellington melts in the mouth and the tuna tartare is exquisite, delighting visitors and residents alike. *Doubles from £437 (mandarinoriental.com).* ▷

**THE DOLLI***Athens, Greece*

The Dolli comes with an unbeatable plus: a rooftop restaurant with a 360-degree panorama of Athens. Look ahead and there, startlingly close, is the Parthenon. Left, over the infinity pool, is Mount Lycabettus; look right, and you'll see the Temple of Hephaestus. It's a terrific venue: tranquil at breakfast and lively at dinner, when the celeriac soup with lobster is a must. For years, The Dolli was where *le tout* Athens congregated, and the hotel has wisely retained the original vast wooden doors and huge windows. Still, the decor is full of surprises. An enormous silver frog and a whopping fake sheep greet guests on arrival. And down the hall, Le Bar Secret boasts Cocteau plates, a Calder mobile, contemporary furniture and 18th-century tables: 'very British, with Greek touches', as the staff claim. The eclecticism continues upstairs with bedrooms that are epitomes of modernity. The hotel aims to make the Athens experience exquisite, but they do better than that. They make it fun. *Doubles from £754 (thedolli.com).*

*In the middle of the action, ancient and modern, The Dolli has a rooftop restaurant and a treat of an infinity pool*

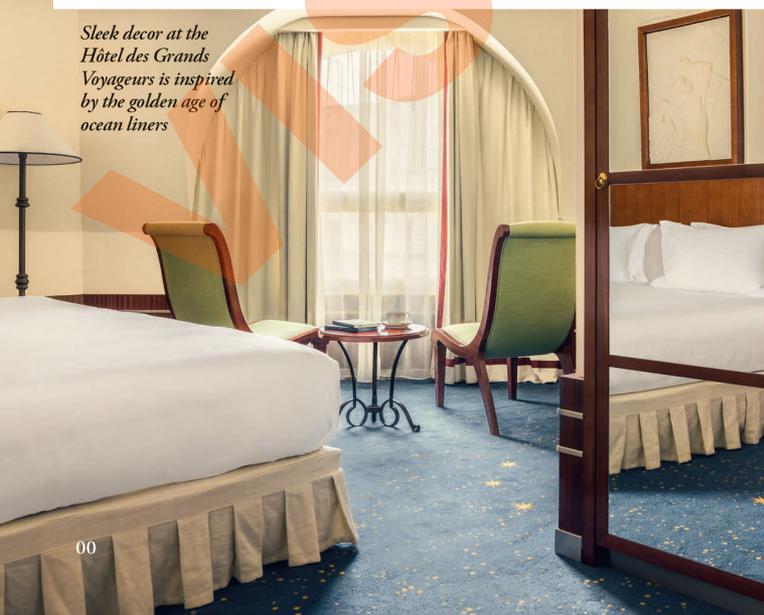


*Lap up Big Apple energy from the heated outdoor pool at Equinox Hotel New York*

**HÔTEL DES GRANDS VOYAGEURS***Paris, France*

You'll feel like donning an Yves Saint Laurent tuxedo here, in homage to Betty Catroux. Bang in the middle of the Left Bank, it's the definition of cool: bohemian with a touch of art deco, its no-nonsense, mid-century lines conjuring up a Helmut Newton backdrop. Milanese architect and interior decorator Fabrizio Casiraghi's eclectic eye is apparent throughout, celebrating an opulent style that's more old-world European than entirely French. The rooms are generously sized, with huge beds as their centrepieces; and Poppy, the dimly-lit subterranean bar-cum-nightclub, is always buzzing with cosmopolitan types dressed in black, admiring the original Chagall lithographs and sipping on Hemingway daiquiris. The inspiration for the restaurant is the golden age of travel – the scale and glamour of those grand passenger ships – so expect a menu that mixes Gallic flair and NY classics. (Think lobster rolls, burgers and, of course, foie gras on gingerbread.) The gym may be small but, with frescoes by Osanna Visconti, it's equally aesthetically pleasing. *Doubles from £258 (hoteldesgrandsvoyageurs.com).*

*Sleek decor at the Hôtel des Grands Voyageurs is inspired by the golden age of ocean liners*

**LE GRAND MAZARIN***Paris, France*

Surely not? In a quiet street at the heart of Le Marais, just a stone's throw from the Carnavalet and Picasso museums? With the Pompidou right down the road, as well as the best falafel in Paris, at L'As du Falafel? But that's the location of the Mazarin, which earns further points for its proximity to the Jardins des Archives and du Palais Royal, the two most magical squares of green in the city. Tucked away, it feels like a cosy, secret hideaway, albeit one offering any five-star service you could wish for (without the faff and sometimes obsequiousness of those larger, more imposing 'palace' hotels). The vibe here is warm and chic, almost like you're staying at the home of a fabulous friend who just happens to have a divine chef in residence. And in this bijou bolthole's decor, interior designer extraordinaire Martin Brudnizki has brought all his whimsical – and seriously romantic – sensibilities to bear. There are Aubusson-style tapestry canopies draped above beds, while the green-striped pool boasts both a ceiling fresco inspired by Cocteau and a fabulous hammam. The star of the show, however, is the divine room-service menu, executed with peerless panache, which will have you dreaming about the gravadlax with salmon roe and pickled mustard seeds long after you've left. Not to mention the great gluten-free bread, nor the wonderful taste sensation of the signature taramasalata with sea urchin, followed by the perfect ribeye. *Doubles from £578, including breakfast (legrandmazarin.com).*

*In the heart of Le Marais, Le Grand Mazarin's interiors are a whimsical twist on aristocratic literary salon styling*



TATLER



## EQUINOX HOTEL NEW YORK

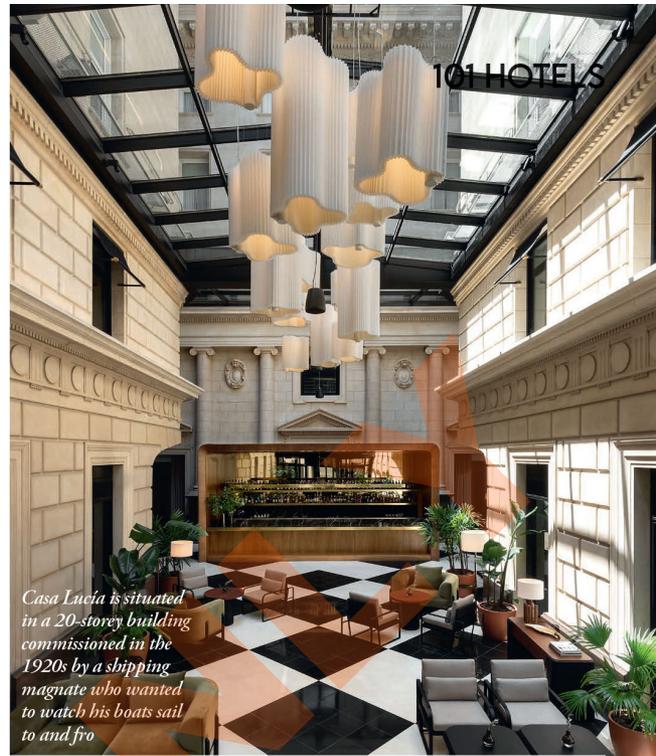
*New York, USA*

For those who want it all, Equinox Hotel New York – nestled on the West Side, in the lively Hudson Yards neighbourhood – is an urban oasis. It's close to the High Line and satisfying step-count walks to the landmark art museums. Inside, you can hit fitness highs in 60,000sqft of workout space – which includes an indoor salt-water pool and a sublime outdoor pool – while also biohacking your way to a more resilient body in the science-backed spa. Innovative treatments such as the MLX i3 Dome (which combines far infrared radiation with plasma and light therapies) stimulate and detoxify the body, while the Icoone Roboderm – a lymphatic sculpting device – helps to achieve optimal body firmness. Wellness carries on in the cooking: indulge in health-forward dishes at Electric Lemon or dine under the stars on the 8,000sqft terrace. And when the day is done, rest comes effortlessly: a 'Dark. Quiet. Cool' reset button transforms your sleek and chic suite into a tranquil, blacked-out haven, its temperature dropping to 18°C – clinically backed for optimal sleep. You will return home revitalised – and ready to rebook. *Doubles from £689 (equinox-hotels.com).*

## BAUR AU LAC

*Zurich, Switzerland*

This is the Sweet William, the Michaelmas daisy, of Zurich's top hotels: a familiar, beloved perennial, back year after year (since 1844) to delight anew. But the ongoing appeal of the Baur au Lac is no gift of nature. It's rooted in the perfectionism of its owners, the Kracht family, who for seven generations have tirelessly tweaked and adjusted to make sure it stays fresh and relevant. Usually, the changes are subtle – the painstaking restoration of the pale oak panelling in the lobby, for instance – and not something you'd necessarily notice from one visit to the next. But occasionally, they are radical; and the Baur au Lac is currently in one of those phases, with sixth-generation Gigi Kracht doing a huge amount to align the hotel with the city's vibrant art scene. Emboldened by the success of designer Martin Brudnizki's glow-up of Baur's bar and brasserie, the proprietors enlisted him to transform Pavilion, their two-Michelin-starred fine-dining restaurant, into a lemon-parasoled, Slim Aarons-style space – named Marguita in honour of two family members – which reopened this summer to gasps of astonishment. Zurich is a city unfairly burdened with lazy stereotypes; as, so often, are such fancy heritage hotels as the Baur au Lac. That both are so good at defying expectations is what makes them great. *Doubles from £849 (bauraulac.ch).* ▷



*Casa Lucía is situated in a 20-storey building commissioned in the 1920s by a shipping magnate who wanted to watch his boats sail to and fro*

## CASA LUCÍA

*Buenos Aires, Argentina*

Housed in what was once Latin America's tallest building, the historic Edificio Mihanovich, Casa Lucía is a triumph in contemporary design. High ceilings, a gleaming chequered floor and a bar at the end of the lobby make for a bold entrance. Bedrooms in earthy tones are sleek and comfortable, and while the bathrooms aren't huge, they are beyond-generously stocked with Diptyque products. Head downstairs for cocktails and tapas at the low-lit Le Club Bacan, where espresso martinis with dulce de leche are not to be missed. And marvel at the main restaurant, Cantina – atmospherically decorated with polo accessories and equestrian-inspired art – which serves sublime cuts of Argentine steak with chips and piquant sauces. What sets this hotel apart is its neighbourhood: the lanes, the art deco and rationalist buildings and tree-lined avenues, best visited in September for the start of the elite polo season. *Doubles from £530, including breakfast (hotelcasalucia.com).*



*Like a setting for a Wes Anderson film, the Brasserie designed by Martin Brudnizki at Baur au Lac*

**ROSEWOOD MUNICH**

*Munich, Germany*

In the heart of the Old Town, a short stroll from Maximilianstraße and the lively beer gardens of the Englischer Garten, Rosewood is the place in Munich to see – and be seen. Just a year old, the city's hottest new hotel sprawls across two landmark buildings – the former HQ of the State Bank of Bavaria and the old Palais Neuhaus-Preysing – and its reincarnation is resplendent. A grand marble staircase sweeps up from street level to a space of brushed brass and warm wood, with hydrangeas on every surface; venture further, and a more playful side is apparent in the dove-grey suites. These are enlivened by jewel-toned velvets, splashy art and fabulous walnut vanity units containing Dyson hairdryers. Objets d'art are positioned between coffee-table books on art and philosophy. Such touches continue in the Cuvilliés Brasserie, where a scoop of chocolate ice cream is sculpted into a perfect rose; and in the morning, Munich's great and good conduct power breakfasts over avocado on rye – alongside a tempting pastry station. Revive in the Asaya spa, where skin is brought back to life with EvidenS De Beauté facials, or make for your suite, and sink into a gargantuan tub of Votary rosemary-scented bubbles. *Doubles from £666 (rosewoodhotels.com).*



*The indoor pool at Rosewood Munich is surrounded by columned salons akin to an aristocratic retreat*



*Hand-painted De Gournay wallpaper at Mandarin Oriental Mayfair is inspired by the magnolias in nearby Hanover Square*

**MANDARIN ORIENTAL MAYFAIR**

*London, UK*

Presiding over the corner of one of London's oldest squares, this urban newcomer is already drawing a chic crowd – including a cohort of international types, who snapped up the private residences long before it opened its doors. And the interiors are exquisite, with a melange of unexpected materials that speak more of a contemporary art gallery than a traditional hotel. The Instagram shot has to be the floating, green-marble staircase that slices through the lobby before descending to the restaurant where chef Akira Back produces sushi platters that are almost too beautiful to eat, as well as a tuna sashimi pizza which is mind-blowingly delicious. Looking for a sharpener? ABar mesmerises with a menu of sake-spiked cocktails, served to a background of kaleidoscopic designs that dance across LED walls; and a rooftop bar is soon set to open. Requiring a recharge? Make for the subterranean spa, where the 25m pool dazzles beneath a galaxy of microscopic lights, and couture-like treatments fuse hands-on techniques with hi-tech alchemy. And oh, the suites! As sleek as ships' cabins: all shimmering, golden-gossamer partitions and hand-painted De Gournay on the walls. Quite the masterpiece. *Doubles from £1,000 (mandarinoriental.com).*

**CASA MONTI ROMA**

*Rome, Italy*

Rome is very much having a moment. And if you want to be in it, this 17th-century landmark in the electric neighbourhood of Monti's beating heart will immerse you in *la vita romana*. Once a noble residence and later a police station, its eclectic decoration reflects that varied history. Conceived by Laura Gonzalez, who playfully mixes antiquities with lemon-printed cushions, yellow tiles and wicker furniture, it's a pastel-plush haven for a stay that will be pure gold; especially when you're being drizzled in rosemary oil in the Susanne Kaufmann spa, where the citrus-inspired interiors and general air of opulence make you feel like you should be wearing Versace. The restaurant, led by Sicilian chef Umberto Tuccio, showcases Roman classics with flair (try the cacio e pepe or the octopus entrée, served on charming Bitossi ceramics). If you're not staying at the hotel, be sure to visit the rooftop bar for a signature La Fioraia. And don't miss the lemon-yellow vintage Fiat 500 parked outside. It's a Roman time capsule to inspire you on your way. *Doubles from £386, including breakfast (casamontioroma.com).* □



*The rooftop spa at Casa Monti Roma taps into the spirit of Roman baths*

PHOTOGRAPHS: © JEROME GALLAYD; © KATE DEVINE; DAVIDE LOVATTI; GEORGE APOSTOLIDIS PHOTOGRAPHY; SIMON BROWN; WINCENT LEROUX

## FOUR SEASONS RESORT KOH SAMUI

*Koh Samui, Thailand*

For total immersion in the third series of *The White Lotus*, Four Seasons Resort Koh Samui is as close as you can get to Mike White's layered version of paradise. As soon as you're whizzed by golf buggy to the open-air check-in, you start to hear the soundtrack – Cristóbal Tapia de Veer's tropical electronic dance music – ringing in your ears. Then you see the show's monkey motif in real life. Carved wooden figurines, dotted among the water features, grin at you as you make your way into the sprawling terraced restaurant for a buffet-breakfast of dreams: from scallop dim sum and crab fried rice to platters of watermelon. The whole place is extra, but that's the point. Its fairytale pavilions and 70 private villas were designed by Bill Bensley, whose rampant decorative keynote is theatrical tropical splendour. If you're on a quest for change, like the *Lotus* characters, the idyllic jungle spa is the *pièce de résistance* for addressing your physical, emotional and spiritual health. But for all the fantasy fabulouness, the staff here have a seriously witchy side that stops you in your tracks. Morning chanting, trippy crystal sound-healings, deep muscle kneading, reiki... But nothing can prepare you for muay thai with professional fighter Kru Ann (who drilled some of the latest *Lotus* cast and crew into shape). He deserves an award for his full-body workout. *Doubles from £958 (fourseasons.com).*

## COWLEY MANOR EXPERIMENTAL

*Cotswolds, UK*

The Rev Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) used to stay at a nearby rectory and people like to think that the manor's environs were where he first met little Alice Liddell. The story certainly inspired decorator Dorothée Meilichzon, who has used chessboard and playing-card motifs to bring a bit of Wonderland to the Cotswolds. This is the latest collaboration between the French designer and the Experimental Group, which itself has grown like Alice on Eat-Me cake from the original Experimental Cocktail Club in Paris. Cowley is its first country-house hotel and it's a statement of sophisticated taste. The wood-paneled dining room has been retained, but elsewhere the mood is bolder, characterised by the monumental free-standing tubs of polished lava-rock in the suite bathrooms. From there, you overlook a terrace and lake which feeds, via a magnificent neoclassical cascade of spouting lions' heads, the River Churn. The restaurant, led by Jackson Boxer – Arabella's grandson – is a true foodie pilgrimage destination. Try his taster menu, and you will be through the looking-glass. *Doubles from £250 (cowleymanorexperimental.com).*



*Even the butter pats at Four Seasons Resort Koh Samui are moulded in the shape of a monkey – the motif of *The White Lotus**

Wish you  
were here

*Cameras, action, roll! Follow the stardust to these bastions of old-school Hollywood and new-age Netflix*



*Chessboard motifs conjure Wonderland whimsy at Cowley Manor Experimental*

PHOTOGRAPH: PATRICK LOCOUENEUX/MR TRIPPER



*Glamour incarnate: the delicately tiled Flowers Pool at Grand Hotel Tremezzo has views of Bellagio*

## GRAND HOTEL TREMEZZO

### *Lake Como, Italy*

Welcome to a Wes Anderson-style nirvana, and one to which we return time and again. This enduringly fantastical old-world institution on Lake Como's west shore, full of Belle Époque exuberance, remains a gloriously escapist site. 'That sunny, happy place,' said Greta Garbo. And to this day it delivers blissful contentment to starlets and power-players. That's thanks to CEO Valentina De Santis, whose sense of authenticity when updating this hotspot-haven ensures its enduring romance. As you pull up to the jetty on a Riva, you'll feel as fabulous as Gwen Stefani in the video for her wistful hit 'Cool'. (If you fear your wardrobe is lacking in Hollywood pizzazz, look no further than Valentina's Sense of Lake shop for retro shades and bombshell swimsuits.) Then spend all day at the T Beach club, lounging on the signature orange sunbeds and gazing at the peak of Grigna; or take a dip in the surreal floating pool-on-the-lake. The Tremezzo excels in the epicurean, especially now that da Giacomo al Lago – an outpost of Milan's renowned restaurant Giacomo – has opened on the water. And wait until the evening, when the lights of billionaires' villas start to twinkle across the lake. What could possibly outshine them? The saffron risotto served at La Terrazza Gualtiero Marchesi, of course. It comes topped with gold leaf. *Doubles from £749, including breakfast (grandhoteltremezzo.com).*

## THE BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL

### *California, USA*

Welcome to the OG Hotel California, where the pink champagne is always on ice. There are few places in the world with such a sense of continuity, of a past preserved that makes the present more special, but this is one. Yes, to stay here is to immerse yourself in the Eagles' song. Nowhere is more bathed in LA gold than the 'Pink Palace'. You want to drink martinis in a satin dressing-gown like Faye Dunaway, lounging by the pool. You want a Sunset club sandwich in the Cabana Cafe, the signature snack of this chilled-out, alfresco haven. You want dinner in the Polo Lounge's bougainvillea-draped garden, where Liz Taylor celebrated her Oscar for *Butterfield 8* – the joint deserves its own award for the power deals made here over the divine McCarthy salad and tortilla soup. And you want to relish the glamour of this lynchpin of the Hollywood scene by staying in Bungalow 1, where Marilyn Monroe loved to hide out. Here, they will lay on her favourite experiences: from steak and an ice cream sundae on room service, to a bath run just how she liked it. Hot, with a bottle of Chanel No. 5 on the side. *Doubles from £763 (dorchestercollection.com).* □



*If walls could talk... the entertaining room in the Presidential Suite at Beverly Hills Hotel*

*A private infinity pool at One&Only Kéa Island, where the Kaiki pool bar is named after the traditional Greek fishing boat*

## ONE&ONLY KÉA ISLAND

### *Kéa Island, Greece*

It's as if Daedalus, the wondrous craftsman of Greek mythology, had designed the stone-edged infinity pools that cascade down the mountain-side of this island that has long been associated with water nymphs. Brand new and blissfully remote, set in a sun-drenched, elemental landscape with sweeping prospects of the Aegean Sea, this One&Only is sure to declutter the busiest of minds. Not least because you have complete privacy in the individual villas, where mid-century-modern meets Cycladic minimalism in luminous shades of stone and sand; where you wake to unspoilt sea views and, yes, your own infinity pool shimmering in the sunlight. As for the hotel hub, which houses a chic boutique, a library, speakeasy-style bar and a host of hangout spaces, praise must go to architect John Heah for making the whitewashed, polished cement and stonework look so otherworldly. As are the breakfasts here, with stations of native delights, among them the flakiest spinach-and-feta pies. Other highlights include the vast pool next to the Kaiki bar; long, languid lunches of fabulous grilled beef and lobster tacos at the Bond Beach Club; and an epic spa menu. The cumulative results of a Subtle Energies facial, marma massage, hydrotherapy in yet another amazing (indoor) pool, acupuncture and bodywork leave you feeling like a beautiful modern-day nymph. But actually... nothing beats rising from your sumptuous bed and diving straight in to your own thrilling infinity pool. *Doubles from £1,662 (oneandonlyresorts.com).* ▷



# These poolish things

*Jump right in... to a mesmerising infinity pool, a film-set piscina or a soothing spa circuit. The elixir of life is guaranteed to heal*

**COBBLERS COVE**  
*Barbados, Caribbean*

It's all about the pool at Cobblers Cove: the pink-and-white-striped parasols and matching lilos floating languorously in its turquoise, kidney-shaped expanse; the luxuriously comfortable sun loungers, nicely spaced apart for extra privacy; the sweet scent of frangipani flowers in the air; and the postcard-perfect palm trees dotted here, there and everywhere. Best of all, though, is the view from this vantage point: white sandy beaches and a crystal-clear sea, stretching further than you can see and graced by an apparently endless series of rainbows – largely due to flash-and-they're-gone tropical showers – which seem so close that you could happily paddle out to find their pots of gold. If a good hotel is to be judged by the calibre of its club sandwich, then the one served here by the friendliest waiters wins hands-down (though the Caesar salad, made with juicy blackened lobster, and the tall glasses of iced tea are not to be missed either). Come four o'clock-ish, afternoon tea is laid out on the adjacent veranda – scrumptious finger sandwiches and perfectly proportioned slices of proper, homemade cake, all on exquisite green-and-white china – and perhaps you'll want to play board games on the hyper-chic rattan tables designed by Lulu Lytle; or greet the resident, immaculately mannered monkeys, who typically pop by to say hello at this time. At night, the pool transforms into a glamorous bar with cocktails and music. And somehow before you know it, days have flown by, the holiday is drawing to a close and you haven't left the grounds. Nor in any way, or at any point, wanted to. *British Airways (britishairways.com) offers seven nights for two from £3,020, including flights.*

*Legend at Cobblers Cove has it that any guest who can drink five Cobblers Coolers and walk around the kidney-shaped pool without falling in wins a five-night stay*



*The Green Pool is one of two at Il San Corrado di Noto; the One Hundred Blue Pool was inspired by the design used by the Roman Empire to train athletes*





*After visiting Hotel Bel-Air in the 1990s, the then Prince of Wales remarked that the Presidential Suite was 'like staying at a rich friend's home'*

## HOTEL BEL-AIR

*California, USA*

You'll want to be here wearing a pair of tortoiseshell cat-eye frames from Cutler and Gross, eating a lobster cobb salad and relishing the birdsong and heavenly peace that engulfs the pool, buried deep in the Bel-Air's tropical gardens. Everyone raves about the pool at sister hotel, The Beverly Hills, but this tourmaline oval, garlanded by towering palms, is the real silent star. The Bel-Air is classic Tinseltown: in 1954, Grace Kelly celebrated an Oscar win in one of its suites; in another, in 1962, Marilyn Monroe posed for her last photoshoot. Secluded in the canyon hills, the acme of understated luxe, the hotel's legendary estate has been enchanting guests and well-heeled locals since 1946. And once you've crossed over its celebrated Swan Lake, it's like you've entered a bougainvillea-wreathed vortex where you'll want to dwell forever. And why shouldn't you, when the garden bungalows are such glamorous showstoppers (some with their own plunge pools)? They are a little bit vintage, with padded leather stools and plush patterned carpets; a little bit Hollywood slick, especially in the marbled splendour of the bathrooms; and all have the comfortable feel of a pale pink Prada cashmere cardigan. You can live out your fantasies of being a screen mogul's wife here, doing laps in the main pool before unwinding with yoga and then a firm-handed massage in the spa. And while supper sadly isn't served poolside, the indoor-outdoor restaurant is a deeply satisfying place, where baby artichoke and white asparagus salad may precede a porterhouse steak with bordelaise sauce. *Doubles from £817 (dorchestercollection.com).*



## IL SAN CORRADO DI NOTO

*Sicily, Italy*

It's the very definition of *il dolce far niente*. At this Sicilian sanctuary, the hardest decision of your day is which magnificent stretch of water to position yourself beside. There are two statement architectural aqua-zones to float in: one, a vast 100m-long Majorelle-coloured piscina, bordered by swaying banana trees; the other, a huge square-cut aquamarine, surrounded by the blindingly white low-slung villas and suites that overlook the rolling olive groves of this ancient masseria. (And you simply must stock up on its olive oil.) Il San Corrado is a special place, not just because its tranquillity enables the busiest minds to switch off; but because it takes things to the next level. Size really does matter here, and the bedrooms are enormous; whether you're in one of the 26 suites – two with their own pools – or the eight villas, which all have them. Here, light and spaciousness reign supreme, too: everything is crisply minimal but sultry, with sleek wooden floors and clean-lined frames around the four-poster beds. At breakfast, feast on the most incredible, still-warm brioches with servings of almond or pistachio granita, or go wild and try the hazelnut-studded cakes. Then spend a hot day exploring the Baroque wonders of nearby Noto; or seeking out the hotel's beach club, a chic but simple affair on a swathe of sandy-gold beach, where staff serve Caesar salads, which are best accompanied by a carafe of white wine and peaches. When you return at sunset and sink into your private plunge, you'll realise how the magic of those easy yet perfect moments has been wrought by the hotel's captivating creed that the good life just comes easily here. Aside from all the hedonism, though, GM Rita is exceptional, pointing you in the right direction for Amaretto sours in the beguiling bar, or booking you a table at the Principe di Belludgia gourmet restaurant, where the food – while ambitious – is surprisingly comforting. But the best spot at which to reflect on what this sensational place manages to achieve through simplicity is a table at Casa Pasta: sitting poolside here, you can try the best vongole on the island, followed by a salt-baked seabass of dreams, served with chargrilled chicory, fennel and courgettes. And drizzled with that divine olive oil. *Scott Dunn (scottdunn.com) offers five nights from £6,500, including breakfast, flights and transfers.* ▷

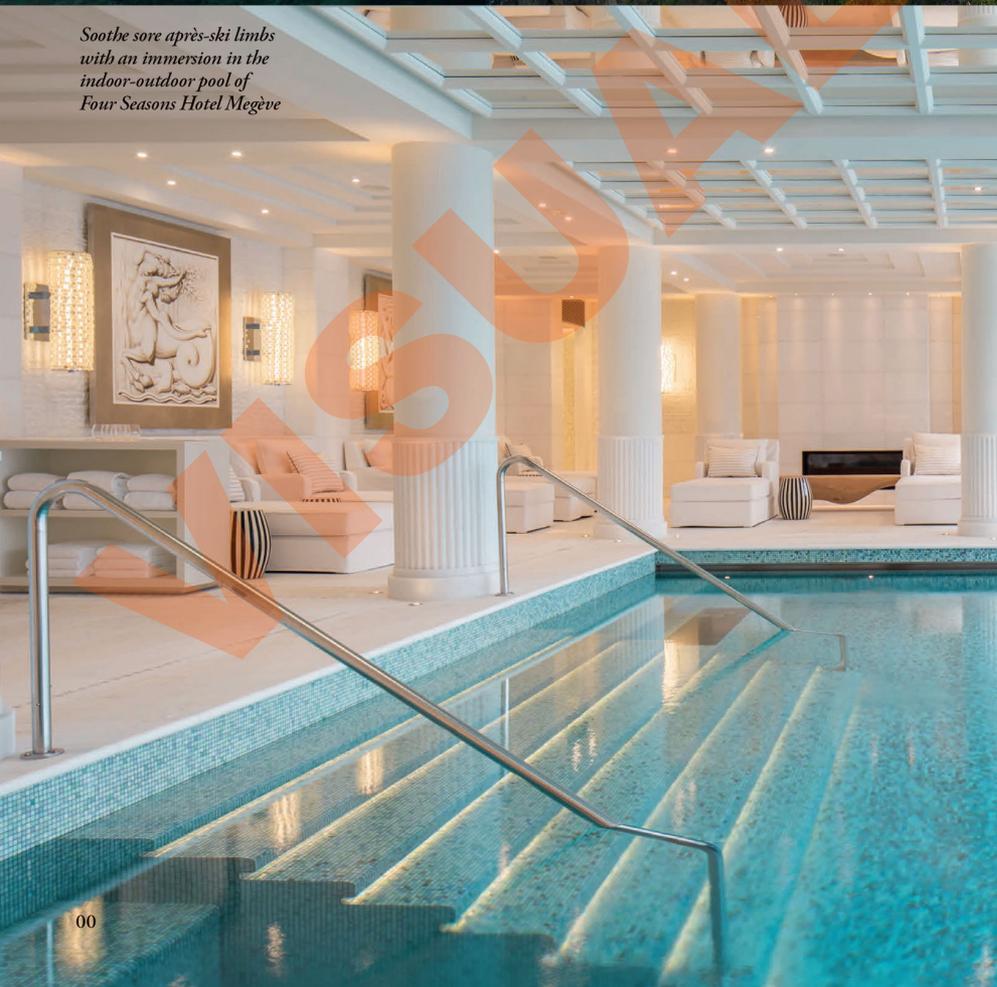
## SILVERSANDS BEACH HOUSE

Grenada, Caribbean

There's a sweet cinnamon-scented breeze here; particularly at night, when you bathe in the warm air and aquamarine glow of the fabulous pool. The beach is a huge draw, too: those bone-white sands that soothe the soul. At this younger sibling of the Grand Anse resort, the clientele is more couples than families – in the luxe treehouse-style canopied suites, everything is crisp, fresh and white – and the way of life is equally romantic. Mornings begin with hikes through rainforest, diving into waterfalls and meeting monkeys; or with sunrise paddleboarding across crystal-clear waters; or with simply staying put, eating platters of papaya and lime. Take the 10-minute shuttle to Grand Anse and relish doing laps in the longest pool in the Caribbean: it's straight from the pages of *Architectural Digest*. (Before you know it, you'll be ordering another piña colada.) Back at base, it's dinner at Azzurro, the hotel's Italian-with-a-Caribbean-twist restaurant. Specialities include a whipped cod with bell pepper sauce and mahi-mahi steaks with garlic jus, as well as an almond parfait and sponge crowned with passion fruit. *Elegant Resorts* ([elegantresorts.co.uk](http://elegantresorts.co.uk)) offers seven nights from £3,999, including breakfast, flights and transfers.

*Silversands Beach House guests can kayak on Grand Anse beach at night in a transparent, illuminated boat*

*Soothe sore après-ski limbs with an immersion in the indoor-outdoor pool of Four Seasons Hotel Megève*



## FOUR SEASONS HOTEL MEGÈVE

Megève, France

There are pools, and then there are twinkling, pleasure-palace piscines which extend through glass doors into the brisk Alpine air of Mont d'Arbois. Bubbling around beneath the snow-capped mountains in this art deco-inspired lagoon, you can contemplate the most important things in life. Such as the hotel's reception desk, with its panoramic views of the peaks, which looks to have been chiselled from a block of ice; or Kaito, the Japanese fusion restaurant serving up seabass sashimi with a touch of truffle. What else would one expect from a meeting between the Four Seasons and the Rothschild family? The banking dynasty's name is omnipresent in Megève; the entire resort was dreamt up by Noémie de Rothschild, wife of Baron Maurice, who envisioned a French rival to St Moritz. The hotel's chic, rustic interiors – think log fires and picture-book windows that frame the mountains – brim with eclectic ceramics and artworks from the private collection of Ariane de Rothschild. In the ski room, brimming with drinks and snacks, your ski boots will be delivered to you already warmed-up. *Allez! Doubles from £1,674* ([fourseasons.com](http://fourseasons.com)). □

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALEJO GAROZZO, NICK SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY, RICHARD WAITE PHOTOGRAPHY, RUPERT PEACE, SAM TODD PRESS PHOTOGRAPHY



**THERE ARE SO MANY TRAVEL SITES** and booking options out there nowadays, it can be rather difficult to separate the wheat from the chaff – especially if you're partial to independent hotels that come with an assured level of luxury as well as their own unique charm. Enter, PoB Hotels, a collection of properties across the British Isles that are distinctive and full of character, yet also finished to exacting standards.

There are more than 50 luxury independent hotels included in this carefully curated collection, and to say it includes some of the finest hotels in the nation is no overstatement. You might be drawn to the classic country house charm of Gravetye Manor in Sussex, surrounded by winding paths and manicured flower beds. Or perhaps you'd prefer a spoiling spa break in Bath at The Royal Crescent Hotel & Spa, a gourmet break on the edge of the Forest of Bowland at Northcote, or even a Highland fling at The Torridon hotel – a luxurious way of exploring the wild, secluded beauty of Scotland.

To ease the often painful process of booking, you can plan your next blissful break using a map, or choose from one of the company's inspiring lists, organised by destination, style and so forth. It's also worth bearing in mind

*Clockwise from top: Gravetye Manor in Sussex; fine dining on the edge of the Forest of Bowland at Northcote; the elegant interiors of The Royal Crescent Hotel & Spa in Bath*



*There are more than 50 luxury independent hotels included in this carefully curated collection*

that PoB Hotels offer vouchers, which make an uncommonly good gift. Whether it's a delightful afternoon tea, a relaxing massage, a memorable dinner, or even a getaway across the British Isles, a voucher offers the ultimate in flexibility – and luxury. Your recipient can choose from all of the hotels, restaurants or spas in the collection, ensuring a perfect fit for any occasion, wish or whim. They come as beautifully packaged physical gifts or as instant e-vouchers – ideal for last-minute present needs.

Wherever you (or your lucky recipient) heads off to in the PoB Hotels collection, you can be guaranteed that relaxation, uplifting design, authentic character and seamless service awaits. The only challenge that remains is deciding which of these inspiring, high-quality properties to visit first...

# Beach clubs

Nothing declares summer glamour more than a beachfront lined with striped parasols, stylish cabanas and sunbeds with waiter service

TATLER  
AWARD-WINNER  
2025

The talk of Taormina: Lido Villeggiatura, the new beach club at Belmond's Villa Sant'Andrea, echoes 1950s Italian elegance

## VILLA SANT'ANDREA, A BELMOND HOTEL

Taormina, Sicily

The diamond sparkle bouncing off the water is almost blinding. At this aquacentric establishment – below the hilltop town of Taormina, smouldering on the secluded Mazzarò Bay – everything revolves around the shingle beach, where the quality of the sea is beyond: clear as glass and just the right amount of swell. Being here makes you feel liberated, content to be fully in the present, with life reduced to delightful simplicities and the hardships of winter far, far away. As for the hotel's new Lido Villeggiatura beach club, it's the essence of a Sicilian summer; whether you're watching a sunset screening of *Call Me By Your Name* or lying post-breakfast in your Missoni bikini, scanning *La Repubblica* with an almond granita to hand. The spell of this place is not overly saccharine or nostalgic, though there is still plenty of *Mambo Italiano*, Monica Vitti bombshell beauty to it. It's glamorous but not bling, cool but not at all intimidating; from the moment you chance upon its generously spaced blue-and-white-striped sunbeds, you'll want to

stay forever. Especially as you savour the club's signature riff on a piña colada (with the addition of pistachio liqueur). It's all about long alfresco lunches, when the biggest decision of the day is choosing between a platter of red prawn crudo or spaghetti with Ganzirri clams. When the sun's glare gets too much, there's a host of hangouts to which you can retreat, where you will savour period furniture and aged tiled floors, as well as the wide range of books and squashy places for reading them in peace. The interiors are masterworks of soothing, contemporary design and fabulous linens, and the bathrooms are stocked with an abundance of Acqua di Parma products. These smell just as powerful as the garden setting for your evening cocktail, where you can breathe in the evocative aroma of orange blossom and jasmine, and watch the surf roll out. Then there's Brizza, the more gastronomic of the water's-edge restaurants, where you can take in the panorama with a bottle of Franciacorta in ice. It serves fine wines from the slopes of Etna while chef Agostino D'Angelo does miraculous things with seafood. *Scott Dunn (scottdunn.com) offers five nights from £6,500, including breakfast, flights and transfers.*

## FOUR SEASONS HYDRA

Hydra, Greece

Hydra has long been a magnet for writers, artists and musicians seeking a spiritual connection. The same intangible alchemy that draws them has been channelled into this family-run beach-club-with-rooms (which, despite its name, has nothing to do with the luxe hotel conglomerate). Its historic 19th-century mansion is an enlightening find. Here, all is deliciously and distinctly local. There are no revvinwg sportscars, as Hydra is vehicle-free; nor are there basses blasting on the private beach. There's just you and the chirping cicadas in the pines. Days are spent lounging at the hotel's restaurant, which draws such serious art players as Jeff Koons and Juergen Teller whenever they're on the island. The maître d', Stefanos, could rival anyone at Arlington or the River Café for efficiency and charm. And just watch the dexterity of a maestro as he plates up grilled seabass and seafood, artfully pairing them with Greek rosés that taste as good as any Provençal. The seven rooms are exemplars of uncluttered contemporary chic, with the most romantic in a seafront villa that sleeps two, overlooking the jetty. Do spend time on Apiliotis, the owner's antique sailing boat. Lying back and watching the world go by – or seeking out deserted coves – is the biggest treat of all. *Doubles from £272 (fourseasons-hydra.gr).*



TATLER



*Beach Suites at Cheval Blanc St-Barth overlook the arc of Flamands Beach – nicknamed Billionaire Beach – in a nod to the owners of nearby private villas*

*The restaurant at Four Seasons Hydra is a favourite of art-world luminaries Jeff Koon and Juergen Teller*

*Enter the party spirit at Beach Rouge, a club and restaurant with an all-hours DJ at LUX\* Grand Baie*



### LUX\* GRAND BAIÉ Grand Baie, Mauritius

Tucked away on one of the island's best beaches and teamed with the slick decor of Kelly Hoppen, this state-of-the-art hideaway attracts an impossibly glamorous young international crowd; and thanks to a healthy Parisian presence, you can expect to witness the very latest in resort wear by day and diamonds glittering by night. The bay's famous turquoise lagoon-view is at its best from Bisou, the 30m adults-only infinity pool on the roof. But it's the dazzling party scene elsewhere that sets this property alight. Soak up the sun at the red-and-white-striped Beach Rouge club while the resident DJ spins mellow tunes; and then, as the sun dips and the space acquires an electrifying red tint, listen to the beat shift to greet the arrival of cocktails, along with the diamonds and couture. If you prefer something more serene, head up to the Bisou bar and restaurant and enjoy the view. Slip into the pool, sip a Canary margarita at your in-water table, then order from the flavour-filled tapas menu (grilled Madagascan prawns followed by banana tacos never fails) and watch the sky turn blazing pink. When a mental and physical reset is needed, the holistic spa lies in wait to nurture every need: from active abdom-inal therapy to revitalising body scrubs, they've thought of everything. *Doubles from £252, including breakfast (luxresorts.com); airmauriti.us.com.*

### CHEVAL BLANC ST-BARTH Saint-Barthélemy, Caribbean

Accessible only by propeller plane, which entails a notoriously hair-raising landing, the island known as the chic winter playground of the *beau monde* is fabulously unspoilt in its white sand, green hills, jewel-blue waters and candy-coloured architecture (with tax-free designer shops). And Cheval Blanc St-Barth, sitting on the perfect arc of Flamands Beach, is at the heart of the mystique. This year, the maison celebrates 10 years of being the ultimate purveyor of tropical chic. *Et c'est vrai!* To stay here is the dreamiest mix of French beach-club sophistication – think mahi-mahi tartare, frites and rosé on your sunbed – and soothing immersion in a tropical garden where turtles wander and birds are full of song. Here, life's a round of sunning, swimming and dinner under the stars; hikes to Colombier Beach, island tours in a pink Mini Moke and Guerlain spa rituals; feet-in-the-sand lunches at La Cabane, and irresistible cocktails and coconut pavlovas at La Case restaurant. Book a Beach Suite and you'll never want to leave: designed with eclectic boho touches by Jacques Grange, each comprises a sumptuous bedroom and dressing room, a vast bathroom and outdoor rain shower, a living room and breeze-kissed terrace whose infinity pool gives mesmerising views of the scene. *Magnifique! Doubles from £680 (chevalblanc.com).* ▷

**D MARIS BAY****Muğla, Turkey**

There's always somewhere new to explore at the D Maris Bay, set in a secluded nature reserve on the Datça Peninsula. But that's the great thing about having five private beaches to choose from. And this clifftop establishment, with its seven restaurants (plus a pastry shop) and splendid Dior-branded pool, gives views to each of them. Families splash in the azure waters of the main Bay Beach; the green umbrellas of Silence Beach offer an escape to over-18s; while the most exclusive is Maris Beach, where the peaceful palm-dotted sands are for suite-guests only. And so relaxing are those suites that taking the water taxi to La Guérite Beach is like entering another world: here lies a club speckled with loungers and canopied daybeds, where guests sip champagne and feast on French cuisine while house music pulses through the air and sets alight the restaurant's vibrant party spirit. For a different type of refuge, though, the charming Manos Beach – next to the hotel's traditional taverna – is perfectly positioned if you want to dine on fine Greek dishes and relax in the sunshine. Evenings at Manos are not to be missed; expect live music and plate smashing. *Doubles from £266, including breakfast (dmarisbay.com).*

*The D Maris Bay water taxi takes guests to La Guérite Beach club, sister to the famed branch in Cannes*



*Home of the Venice Film Festival since 1932, Hotel Excelsior is just 15 minutes from San Marco by hotel shuttle boat*

**HOTEL EXCELSIOR****Venice Lido, Italy**

Moorish, Belle Époque, Gothic: the Excelsior was built as a capriccio, a fantasy realm on the Lido, that strip of land between the Venetian lagoon and the Adriatic Sea. On the lagoon side, shuttle boats ferry guests through narrow canals to the hotel pier, where they're greeted and ushered into the architectural wonder upstairs. On the other lies the Blue Flag beach; here await towelled beds and bowls of water for tired feet – perfect for those who want to intersperse beach life with shuttle trips to Venice. Designed by Giovanni Sardi for the entrepreneur Nicolò Spada, the Excelsior opened in 1908 with a party that still continues. In 1932 it became the home of the Venice Film Festival. Since then Churchill, Ingrid Bergman and George Clooney have sampled its delights. The bedrooms, with Moorish arches and Murano-glass lights, are spectacularly glamorous. For breakfast, lunch and dinner, the Elixir Beach Bar & Restaurant serves exquisite food. For those who want Venice with a beach palace – or indeed a beach palace with Venice – the Excelsior strikes that rare balance: a five-star hotel that feels both starchy and airily laid-back. *Doubles from £293, including breakfast (hotelexcelsiorvenezia.com).* □



*Guests in a private beach hideaway at Soneva Secret are tended to by a 'barefoot guardian' and dedicated chef*

# Paradise found

*You're grounded! Bide your time in Eden-like worlds of shoeless seclusion, dancing fireflies and ancient wellness rituals*

## SONEVA SECRET

*Makunudhoo Atoll, Maldives*

'Do not disturb' should be the motto for this island in the northern Maldives, where the concept is strictly no shoes, no news. Opened in the spring of 2024 and the only resort in the Makunudhoo Atoll, it's staffed by 'barefoot guardians' – the Soneva version of butlers – who act as buffers between you and lifting a finger; and that's very important. Because in this distant other-Eden, even the word 'luxury' sounds cheap. Almost everything at Soneva Secret is on a different level, starting with the villas, which have all you could ever wish for. The expansive properties are open-plan, each featuring a kitchen, bedroom suite, sunken dining area and swimming pool. Some even boast a path leading to a private strip

of beach, where paddle boards await. And on the first storeys? Private spa areas that open onto balconies perfect for a recuperative glass of champagne. Soneva Soul, the in-house spa operation, has a menu of more than 100 treatments to choose from. The owners, Sonu Shivdasani and his wife, Eva, championed a connection with the environment from the beginning; all their island escapes are committed to sustainable living. At this resort, the kitchen team hails from different corners of the world; the idea being that guests can have any cuisine they fancy whipped up for them in their own villas. True, lying in a hammock and reading while the chefs get to work may seem rudely indulgent. But imagine the results. A highlight is the offering from South America – the guacamole is magically fresh, the

build-your-own tacos a treat and the grouper crudo creamy and zestful – but just as fantastic are those from Indonesia and Sri Lanka. Leaving your villa is totally unnecessary, but a particular draw at Soneva Secret is Out of This World, the tasting experience in a castaway tower. As the Indian Ocean crashes round the building, dishes are served in custom-made glassware at bar stools, with the option of cocktail pairing; and truffle tuna sashimi, blue lobster and wagyu beef make up part of the gastronomic adventure. The currency here is not jewels, or glamour, or who you see. It's seeing no one and barely thinking about what to wear. This castaway island feels like yours for the taking. And it is... *Cazenove+loyd (cazloyd.com) offers six nights across two Soneva properties from £13,595, including transfers.*

TATLER  
AWARD-WINNER  
2025



*A no-walls, no-floors villa at Buahan, A Banyan Tree Escape invites communion with the Balinese jungle*

*The Acropolis revisited: Amanzoe is set in olive groves with 360-degree views of the Aegean Sea*



PHOTOGRAPHS: ROBERT RIEGER; STEVIE MANN FOR SONEVA

TATLER

## BUAHAN, A BANYAN TREE ESCAPE

### *Payangan, Bali*

Cicada alarm calls. Volcanic views from your bed. Fireflies dancing above the bathtub. The occasional wide-eyed frog in the loo. There's a trend in hotels connecting their guests with nature, but nowhere does it quite as viscerally as Buahan. The first Banyan Tree Escape is located on 12 acres of pristine land that transports guests back to the traffic-free, tourist-devoid Bali of half a century ago. A main pavilion, a cantilevered infinity pool, a spa and 16 private *bales* are woven into the tangled greenery, without a wall or door inside them. The open-air setting feels sophisticated, respectful of the environment and illuminatingly luxurious. The zero-waste menus are also revelations, with Balinese duck slow-baked in areca palm blossom and jicama roasted with ginseng leaf and passionfruit peanut-oil emulsion. And you can burn off those calories with a hike to the hotel's sacred waterfall, or some moon yoga. Or a visit to Buahan's farmhouse to collect honey that will later be served with your arak and marigold flower cocktail. *Doubles from £987, half board (escape.banyantree.com).*

## AMANZOE

### *Agios Panteleimonas, Greece*

Praise be to Zeus. If you're seeking a modern-day Olympus, you won't be disappointed here. The silence is deafening in architect Ed Tuttle's reimagined Elysium; and though it's a high temple of design, it has warmth at its soul thanks to the GM, Ernst Ludick. An intoxicating scent of lavender permeates the domain, where each of the 41 suites exudes grand minimalism, with private pools, spacious decks, cloud-like beds and vast stone baths completed by huge pillar candles and tubs of Aman salts. Then there's the crown jewel, the sprawling spa, where you can choose from myriad programmes inspired by the holistic wisdom of Hippocrates: signature scrubs, fat-busting body wraps and – alone worth the trip – the most powerful grounding massage. Nothing beats floating out of the spa at cocktail hour, when martinis are served around the fire pit at the hotel's highest point, and immersion in the quietude and beauty of this lofty terrain, with the hills and sea beyond, is best enjoyed against a fiery sunset backdrop. For dinner, food of the Greek gods is served romantically beneath olive trees. Think octopus and fava beans, steamed horta greens, grilled fish and loukoumades – doughnuts drenched in saffron honey – with cinnamon ice cream. Or savour Japanese fare by the pool, where the teriyaki wagyu and salmon sashimi are among the epicurean delights. It's all just too divine... *Doubles from £1,400 (aman.com).* □

**CIPRIANI, A BELMOND HOTEL***Venice, Italy*

All's well with the world when you're at the Cipriani, a private fantasy founded in the 1950s by Giuseppe Cipriani and three Guinness sisters. Surrounded by romantic, *Alice-in-Wonderland* gardens, complete with vineyards and some of the most impressive loggias imaginable, the buildings here are still painted a pale peach. (Well, its founder did think up the bellini.) And there are few culinary experiences that could rival dining in the vast, gilded environs of chef Vania Ghedini's stellar restaurant Oro. Cue appetisers of seafood tortelli or an irresistible and delicate risotto made with nettles and Morlacco cheese; then plates of shelled lobster tails, or fillet of beef with a truffle sauce (which all get top marks, especially for their pairings with wine from the Veneto region). Good food comes in many guises here, whether it's a late lunch hanging over the water at Cip's Club, where a must is to feast on the tagliolini verdi, or the vitello tonnato distinguished by the refinement and garlicky, creamy kick of its dressing. Like Venice itself, the club never disappoints. But it would be rude to not try the Bellini experience at Bar Gabbiano – ideally positioned by the heavenly suntrap of the swimming pool – where you can indulge in memorable variations of their signature cocktail, made with white peaches and Ruinart champagne. *Doubles from £830, including breakfast (belmond.com).*

*The founder of the Cipriani was also the creator of the illustrious bellini cocktail – and guests can take a masterclass at Bar Gabbiano*



*Good taste*

*Lobster Wellington, sublime slithers of wagyu or freshly churned butter from the farm shop: here, it's all about food, glorious food*



**TATLER**  
AWARD-WINNER  
2025

*Château Troplong Mondot has been awarded a prestigious Premier Grand Cru Classé ranking for its red wines*

**CHÂTEAU TROPLONG MONDOT**  
*Saint-Émilion, France*

Perched high above Saint-Émilion, Troplong Mondot is the ultimate seductress; its uniform rows of vines, dotted with bright sparks of fuchsia roses, drawing the eye to the honey-hued town beyond. The 18th-century chateau, with its light-filled interiors, has sumptuous en-suite bedrooms that boast stunning vistas. The day starts with fortifying coffee and delectable pains au chocolat – with the option of adding homemade chocolate praline spread – followed by a meander through the grapes to the cobblestoned streets of Saint-Émilion. Visit between April and August to see traditional Percheron horses at work – they're still valued for limiting soil compaction. The *pièce de résistance* is the Michelin-starred Les Belles Perdrix restaurant, under the direction of chef David Charrier. Start with an aperitif beneath a protective canopy of trees; it's the perfect spot for Taittinger Prélude, enhanced by a side of fresh vine tomatoes. Think tornado of pollock accompanied by smoked eggplant with shiso, followed by rhubarb belle valentine flavoured with almond pesto, verbena and basil. *Doubles from £216, including breakfast (troplong-mondot.com).* ▷

## THE GORING

*London, UK*

'Landmark' is an overused adjective, but not when describing this long-cherished bolthole. A blue-blooded, old-school haven distinguished by the passion of owner Jeremy Goring, its every detail is just-so, especially in its gastronomic offerings. Start with drinks: the Goring Cocktail Bar excels in imaginative Campari spritzes with sprigs of rosemary, alongside sublime martinis and perfectly chilled glasses of Ayala champagne – and superlative Pimm's, which goes so well with Caesar salad. Tuck up in front of a fire here and you'll feel totally at home. As you will tucking in at the Dining Room restaurant, recently revamped by Russell Sage, which strikes just the right chord of elevated Britishness: far from stuffy, with statement chandeliers, powder-green swags and Edwardian-style chaises longues. Flooded with natural light from corner windows, it's further lit up by the personable charm of the staff and the energy and sheer talent of chef Graham Squire; a grown-up crowd gathers for such classics as Drumkilbo, its portions of white flakey crab meat and caviar best savoured with sourdough delivered daily from E5 Bakehouse. Then there's the beef Wellington with short rib – the tenderest in town – and the unparalleled service: cotton-wool cocooning, sublimely diplomatic and genuinely unpretentious. *Doubles from £870 (thegoring.com).*



*The standout at The Goring is its expert sommeliers – while those in the know seek out the secret chef's table for celebrations*

*Come aperitivo hour, prop up the black marble bar at Bulgari Hotel Roma with a negroni and plate of Gillaudeau oysters*



## BVLGARI HOTEL ROMA

*Rome, Italy*

The Eternal City always delivers gastronomically, so for a new *cucina* to make an impression, it needs to be unrivalled in the imposing stakes, and positively radiate glamour. Enter a new-ish star, headed up by Niko Romito, that makes quite the impression. Being in the Bvlgari group, its host-hotel has many seductive attractions, including heirloom diamonds for sale in the lobby, huge suites and glittering wellness facilities. But these also extend to the all-day breakfasts and award-worthy maritozzi cream buns that compete for your attention as much as the architectural wonder in which they are served. The building is an imposing modernist structure from the 1930s, whose outrageous craftsmanship encompasses the en-suite marble baths as well as the vast spa's intricate mosaic tiles. The most memorable artworks may just be Romito's signature veal cotoletta and pasta pomodoro; not forgetting his bruschetta of dreams, drizzled with a cherry tomato concassé and sprinkled with plenty of basil. You could happily eat lunch and dinner on repeat here, working your way through a menu of such exquisite creations as cold tagliolini with langoustines, caviar and almond or green bean lasagna with rich burrata sauce. It's the food of Roman gods. Then there is the chef's take on tiramisu: with its exploding chocolate centre, it's sensational. *Doubles from £1,479, including breakfast (bulgarihotels.com).*





Last known as Claridge's Restaurant 20 years ago, this art-deco bolthole is back with towering fruits-de-mers platters

## CLARIDGE'S

London, UK

The enduring heartbeat of high society, this hotel derives its staying power from being at the intersection of fashion, art and food; in the latter regard, note the lobster Wellington presented on peppermint-striped porcelain, or the club sandwich served in the foyer (notwithstanding the martinis made by the Fumoir's *simpatico* barman, who sources the best nocellara olives in town). But these aside, the Claridge's Restaurant – which recently celebrated its first anniversary – has been a sensational addition to its culinary offering. So what's the secret to this sleek establishment? As one guest says: 'It doesn't try too hard.' Crisp, very British, with high ceilings and elegant cornices, its rich deco-inspired design comes courtesy of Bryan O'Sullivan. The acoustics and lighting are superb and the mood is utterly relaxed, thanks to its charming staff. As for the food: delicious. Here, your gaze is torn from the exceptional seasonal floral displays to the artistry of Irish chef Coalin Finn, who turns the hotel's crest into waffles for breakfast and stamps it into the salted butter. You can forget that Scott's is just down the road when you behold his fruits-de-mer tower or his divine Dover sole, not to mention his fish pie, which is given added drama by a langoustine emerging from the mash. Perhaps the biggest treat of all is the Tomahawk steak for two – more like four; to finish, the blueberry baked alaska more than hits the sweet spot. Claridge's may move with the times but, much like its cuisine, it never succumbs to trendy vagaries. Its menu remains a celebration of classics – with an edge. *Doubles from £840 (claridges.co.uk).*

## HECKFIELD PLACE

Hampshire, UK

Calling Heckfield Place a hotel misses the point. It has a progressive biodynamic market garden, organic farm status and 438 acres of preserved magical wilderness. The food reflects the vision of its billionaire owner, American businessman Gerald Chan, for whom the establishment is somewhere to celebrate the power of soul and soil. Skye Gyngell has a serious-but-dressed-down style of cooking: look to restaurant *Hearth*, which celebrates seared, smoked flavours. With the British climate dictating ingredients, there's always a different savoury temptation to look forward to, think flame-grilled scallops, charred leeks or wood-roasted lemon sole, satisfyingly marinated in butter. Guests love Heckfield's take on the classic Cosmopolitan, made with zero-waste citrus-sapling vodka, and its huge range of biodynamic wines. And if you want to recreate Gyngell's magic at home, stock up on produce from the farm shop, whose homemade sourdough, freshly churned butter and chunks of cheddar come wonderfully wrapped in brown paper. *Doubles from £650, including breakfast (heckfieldplace.com).*



At Heckfield Place, the open-fire *Hearth* restaurant cooks the best of Skye Gyngell's seasonal dishes

Dining at *Four Seasons Astir Palace Hotel Athens* is a smorgasbord of fluffy flatbreads, stuffed vine leaves and chocolate soufflé with pomegranate



## FOUR SEASONS ASTIR PALACE HOTEL ATHENS

Athenian Riviera, Greece

This is the most glorious temple of taste on the Athenian Riviera. There's a sensational flow inside and out; the latter maximising those epic views of the horizon, while the interiors are all about soothing, contemporary design and luscious linens. The dining venues are peerless, ranging from *Matsuhisa Athens* for sushi and sashimi – think lobster tempura and lychee martinis at sunset – to the waterside *Taverna 37*, which excels at such grilled Greek specialities as blackened lamb chops and charred or salt-baked sea bass. For eating as high theatre, *Pelagos* is the star. Take chef Luca Piscazzi's version of linguine vongole, in which the briny kick of clams is replaced by caviar, served cold to enhance the flavour; or his olive oil tasting odyssey, a slick affair of artisanal varieties sourced everywhere from Naxos to Sifnos. *Doubles from £582, including breakfast (fourseasons.com).* ▷

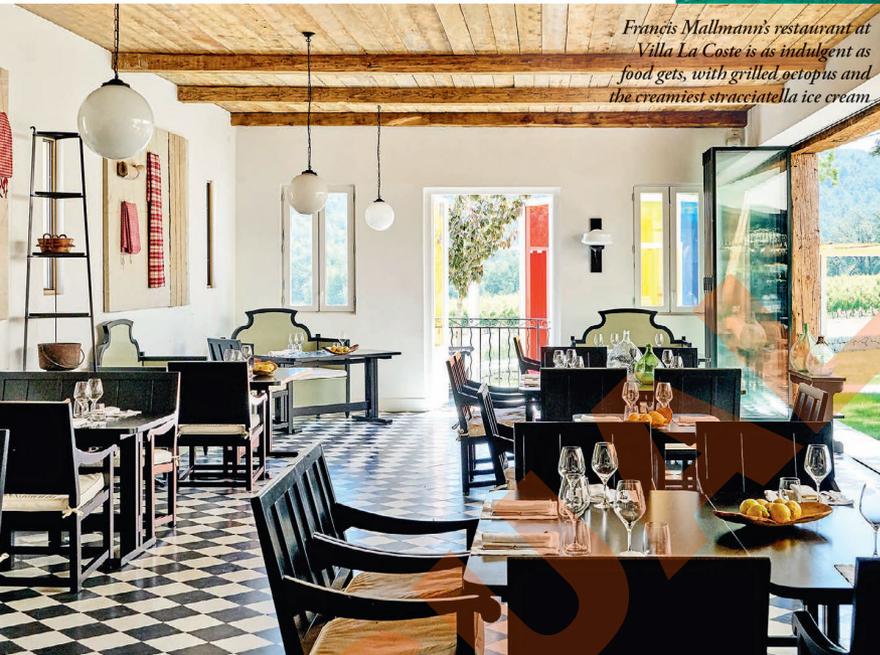
**BOTANIC SANCTUARY ANTWERP**

*Antwerp, Belgium*

There's a transportative tranquillity to Botanic Sanctuary, despite its city-central location. That's due to its extensive spa offering and sumptuous rooms which all but guarantee a good night's sleep. But there's another feather to this establishment's cap: its food. The hotel glories in five restaurants, with a sixth in the pipeline; plus its own whisky investors' club (which requires a minimum investment of €250,000) and a private dining room elaborately painted wholly in red wine. At the Michelin-starred Het Gebaar, sample chef Roger van Damme's work-of-art pastries, or indulge on oysters and Belgian waffles while people-watching at the hotel's Sunday brunch. But the real magic happens at two-Michelin-starred Hertog Jan, where chef Gert De Mangeleer takes patrons on a three-hour West-Flemish culinary journey that will blow away even the most discerning gourmet. Anyone for yellowtail with caviar and yuzu vinaigrette? *Doubles from £379 (botanicantwerp.be).*



*After perusing the sartorial offering of the city that birthed the Antwerp Sex, take your pick of Botanic Sanctuary's three Michelin-starred restaurants for dinner*



*Francis Mallmann's restaurant at Villa La Coste is as indulgent as food gets, with grilled octopus and the creamiest stracciatella ice cream*

**VILLA LA COSTE**  
*Provence, France*

The rustle of written yearnings tied to Yoko Ono's Wish Trees; the cool, smooth surface of a vast marble bath; the crunch of olive-shaped chocolate almonds: Villa La Coste is an unquestionably aesthetic experience and, oh, the taste sensations you encounter here! Eating well starts at breakfast with French toast or a memorable courgette flower and goat's cheese frittata. After a meditative walk through the vineyards to relish the charms of Tunga's artwork, return to lunch on Hélène Darroze's menu, which elevates the herbs, flowers, fruit and vegetables of this Provençal estate to stratospheric heights. For seasonal cooking at its finest, try her celebrated fig dessert: the fruit part-roasted in honey and vinegar then topped with fig ice cream and drizzled with an elixir concocted from fig jus and olive oil. Don't miss the flame-grilling of Argentine chef Francis Mallmann: he does the ultimate steak supper – best paired with a glass of the establishment's red from owner Paddy McKillen's other vineyard in Argentina. *Doubles from £812, including breakfast (villalacoste.com).*

**BEAVERBROOK**

*Surrey, UK*

Do a moon ritual here – a journey of breathwork and sound healing – and you'll work up quite an appetite; likely so much that, when you arrive in the Dining Room, the first taste of its lobster tacos will render you speechless. The whole affair is ineffably wondrous: the deeply cosy interiors made for sipping wine by the fire, and the spellbinding work of sommelier Giovanni Tallu. He will give you an oenophilic education on delicate sakés as much as silky Montrachets; his pairings are unparalleled, whether with Japanese scallops, steaming slithers of wagyu, aged toro tartare or mouth-watering grilled pork with red peppercorn sauce served in the shade of a bonsai tree. Guests come – repeatedly – to savour chef Wojciech Popow's creations teamed with Tallu's recommendations. Whatever their indulgence the night before, guests all appear at breakfast with the unfakeable air of being truly rested. *Doubles from £610, including breakfast (beaverbrook.co.uk).* □



*Few pleasures can match the simplicity of Beaverbrook's scrambled eggs with crispy bacon at breakfast*

PHOTOGRAPHS: HUGO THOMASSEN PHOTOGRAPHY; © ROMAIN RICARD; FRANCESCO LUCIANI; LARS ERBATT; MATTA AQUILA; NICK ROCHOWSKI; RICHARD HAUGHTON

# House style

*Oliver's Travels curates villas and unique stays across the globe that are not only elegant and luxurious, but unlike any other home rentals out there*

**IMAGINE STAYING IN A SPRAWLING** 15th-century chateau in France's Loire Valley surrounded by acres of parkland with enough chic salons and opulent halls for long nights of revelry. Or perhaps you'd rather stray a little further than Europe to a sunset-view villa on an idyllic island in Thailand, or a stylish pool apartment overlooking Table Mountain in Cape Town. All this – and much more – is on offer from Oliver's Travels, the luxury villa company that's made a name for itself among savvy jet-setters over the past two decades.

Each of the villas in the impressively broad yet carefully curated portfolio has been handpicked for its exceptional character. What sets Oliver's Travels apart from other villa rental companies is the range of homes on offer – not just luxurious villas but châteaux and castles, ski chalets, city apartments, wellness retreats and wedding venues. There are also the more eccentric rentals in the company's Quirky Collection, including a handsome former school house set among the bucolic beauty of the Norfolk Broads, and a stylishly converted Boeing 737 perched on the staggeringly beautiful cliffs of Uluwatu in Bali.

There are homes to rent in more than 30 countries across the globe, with recent

*Stay in a former school house among the bucolic beauty of the Norfolk Broads, or a stylishly converted Boeing 737 in Bali*



*Impressive villas and exemplary views are to be expected at an Oliver's Travels residence*

destination additions including Lapland, Sri Lanka, Calabria and a charming selection of summer chalets for those seeking a sun-dappled Alpine adventure. There's a similar breadth of sizes to choose from; whether you're travelling with an intergenerational family group, a beloved gang of friends or simply *à deux*, there are villas that sleep from two to 20 – and even 80. There are hundreds of party-ready pads to browse, as well as places that are perfect for hosting a sophisticated hen or stag do, a long-awaited school reunion, or the annual break with family, friends or both.

Wherever you jet off to, you'll get the full benefits of the Oliver's Travels Destination



Experts, all of whom have lived in the country they look after for an average of 15 years to gain the ultimate insider knowledge. Then there's the dedicated concierge professionals, who can organise every aspect of your stay while you remain in uninterrupted holiday mode. This means you can arrive to a stocked fridge, with a hire car waiting, the best table in town booked and plans made for a local experience that you wouldn't find in a guide book.

The only danger of the extensive options is that you might find yourself somewhat spoiled for choice. But fear not, the Oliver's Travels team of travel consultants is on hand to guide you through everything, and even shortlist a selection of rentals tailored to your preferences if you don't have time to browse. Finding the holiday home of your dreams couldn't be easier.



# The inside track

*Bored of your decor at home? Transport yourself to rooms dressed in palazzo finery on the Grand Canal, bars redolent of Jazz Age glamour and the sleekest of contemporary enclaves*

**TATLER**  
AWARD-WINNER  
2025

## THE EMORY

*London, UK*

Behold a proper temple of design: expensively understated yet impossibly elevated. And as one of the late Lord Rogers of Riverside's last projects, it has an illustrious architectural pedigree. Interiors-wise, every two floors had their own dedicated decorators – an eminent roll call spanning Alexandra Champalimaud, André Fu, Patricia Urquiola and Pierre-Yves Rochon – and though all the suites have their own idiosyncrasies and subtle signatures, the style and mood is one of grand minimalism. What scale, too, with floor-to-ceiling windows framing fantastic park views best enjoyed from a generously over-sized bed covered in Frette Egyptian cotton. Vast stone baths look like they could be Marina Abramović installations at Frieze, but with softer lighting. Then there are the butlers on hand to telepathically anticipate your desires and guide you down to the spa, the most in-demand private gym-cum-wellness club in London. Yes, Surrenne spa is a standout facility, spread over four storeys, a potent combination of high-tech medical care, top therapists and holistic offerings. Eventually, you'll find yourself at ABC Kitchens, a branch of Jean-Georges Vongerichten's renowned New York eatery that serves spring-pea guacamole, Dorset crab toasts and all kinds of seafood tartares. Take the lift up and above the rooftops to The Emory Rooftop Bar for a Bliss martini, or head to the adjoining cigar bar to light up a vintage Cohiba El Laguito. Here you will find the regulars: power players who come for a break from business and to Instagram the revolving cigar collection. They sure do keep the glamour-quotient vertiginous at The Emory. *Doubles from £1,440 (the-emory.co.uk).*

*Guests can be delivered to The Emory's Penthouse suite by helicopter*

*The Emory Rooftop Bar hosts residencies by star mixologists such as Tato Giovanni, who created a martini from rainwater*

## THE FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL

*New York, USA*

The art curation here is spellbinding – starting with Pae White’s shimmering, hallucinogenic tapestry of insects, gold-brocade mushrooms and opium poppies hanging behind the concierge – as is the idiosyncratic taste on display. Cabinets of wondrous curiosities line the lobby: a mica book, a glass slipper, even a water-bag of goldfish. The Martin Brudnizki design throughout the hotel manages to brilliantly evoke both the glamour of the Jazz Age and the bohemian romanticism of the Belle Époque. In the spacious and incredibly comfortable suites you will find pink walls, teal velvets teaming with duck-egg and cyclamen paintwork, Indian inlaid marble tables and lacquered chinoiserie chairs. To further enhance the mood, you’re assigned a butler, and we advise you ask for Phillip Lewis: discreetly attentive, he seems to have been transported from the 1920s, his suavity never deserting him at any time of the day or night. And if you want to see even more lacquer, marble and chandeliers – with lashings of brass and oriental antiques galore – then book into The Topiary Suite, which boasts its own whimsical rooftop garden. What could possibly tempt you out of it? New York’s most lavish gastronomic option, just downstairs. At Café Carmellini (the city’s answer to the River Cafe), the squab en crouste is legendary. *Doubles from £690 (thefifthavenuehotel.com).*

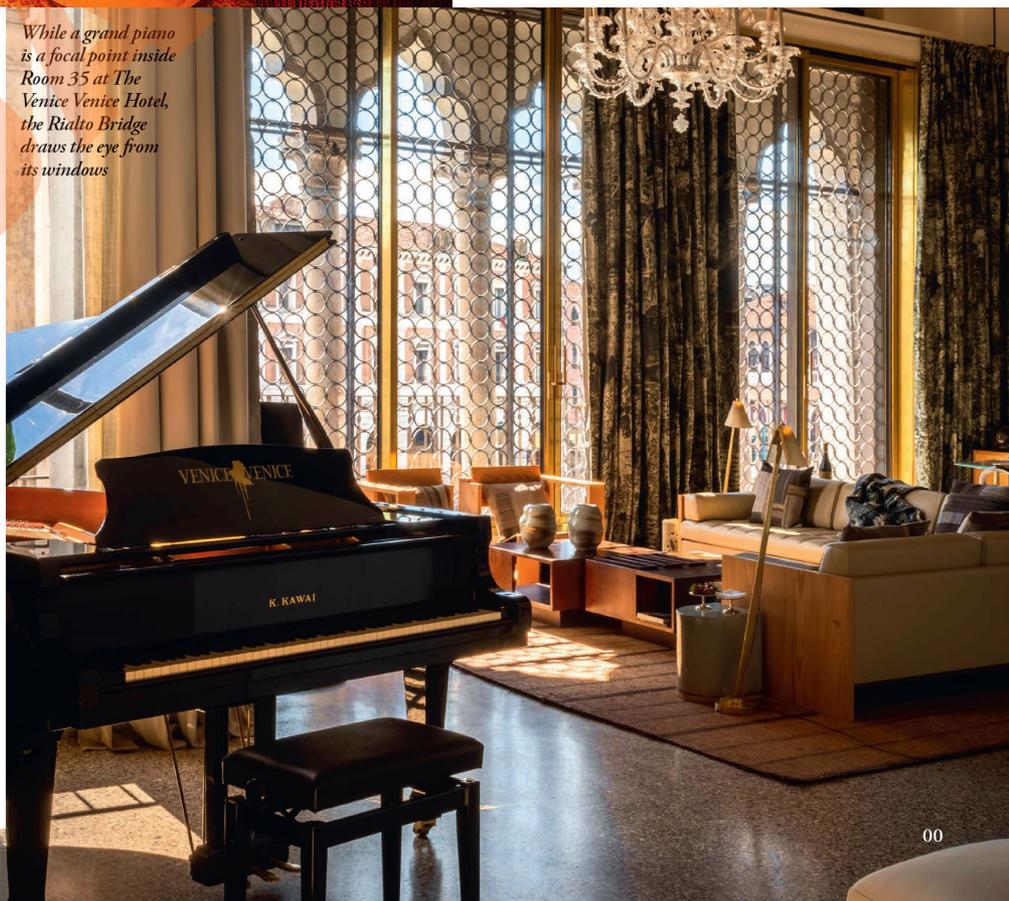
*Martin Brudnizki has injected a modern vibrancy to The Fifth Avenue Hotel, once home of the celebrated Gilded Age hostess Charlotte Goodridge*

## THE VENICE VENICE HOTEL

*Venice, Italy*

This place, the apogee of progressive style, has recently undergone an arduous restoration programme, bankrolled by fearless owners Francesca Rinaldo and Alessandro Gallo. Their uniquely maverick and magpie eyes have effected a lavish, Cinderella-style transformation of the palazzo and its congregation of courtyards, cloistered corridors and cellars. The Venice Venice Hotel occupies one of the city’s most impressive historic sites: Ca’ da Mosto, a 13th-century Byzantine-inspired jewel, the first palace to be built on the Canalazzo. Couple this with the owners’ gallery-grade art and photography collection – including contemporary pieces by Jannis Kounellis, Bruce Nauman and Renato D’Agostin – and such statement-design touches as a mirror framed in canal-clay, tin baths and 1980s-style padded leather couches. The restaurant buzzes from breakfast to midnight, attracting Venetians with some of the best food in town – impeccable platters of carpaccio or spaghetti with langoustines – all served right by the water’s edge. *Doubles from £500, including breakfast (venicevenice.com).* ▷

*While a grand piano is a focal point inside Room 35 at The Venice Venice Hotel, the Rialto Bridge draws the eye from its windows*



## HEMINGWAYS EDEN RESORT

Nairobi, Kenya

Once the supercool home of buccaneering artist Tonio Trzebinski, this enclave in Nairobi is now a boutique pearl in the Hemingways portfolio. The buildings and furniture still bear in spades the haute bohemian mark of its late owner and his widow, Anna; everywhere, you see Trzebinski's dynamic works, clearly influenced by Francis Bacon, as well as the bone-filled, glass-topped tables he created from wood salvaged from shipwrecked dhows. The decoration of the three suites is lavish: enormous beds, rainwater showers, shell-bedizened mirrors and, wrapped around the master suite, a veranda on which to loll and listen to the calls of nearby wild animals. (Eden borders a giraffe sanctuary.) Near the old studio, now housing five en-suite rooms, is the concept store, full of locally made jewellery, clothes, and ceramics. An open-deck restaurant and very chic bar, overlooking a pond sheltered by netting that throws leaf-shaped shadows, is *the* place to eat grilled jumbo prawns. *Doubles from £616, including breakfast (hemingways-collection.com).*

*Hemingways Eden Resort, the former home of Tonio Trzebinski, who trained at the Slade School of Fine Art, is filled with his artworks*



## GRAND HOTEL SON NET

Mallorca, Spain

Buried deep in the rolling Puigpunyent Valley is Mallorca's most resplendent star. Grand Hotel Son Net, whose 17th-century main building has been revived by superstar designer Lorenzo Castillo, is the epitome of old-world grandeur, and no corner has been cut. The interiors, featuring Ikat fabric-covered walls, abundant colour and a superb use of marble, will make you want to run home and redecorate your entire house; the antiques – 18th-century French and Spanish, with dashes of chinoiserie and plenty of gilt mirrors – will make you green with envy. It's a place in harmony with its setting, enfolded by vineyards that yield the hotel's own excellent wine. Its spa, reached by a pathway lined with lavender, unfolds its magic as you enter: treading on chequered prune-and-cream marble floors beneath rattan ceilings, past limewashed per-simmon walls that glow. The list of treatments is beautiful, with an emphasis on Eastern practices. (In the Thai-inspired bodywork, the muscles are deliciously pulled and stretched.) There's no better place to recuperate than the indoor pool, lined with burnt-red tiles and day beds. Those delights apart, the clientele is cool, the hiking breathtaking and the food outstanding. (Think market tomatoes, which sing with garlic and chilli oil.) At Son Net, it's all about the art of living well – surrounded by the hallmarks of superlative taste. *Carrier (carrier.co.uk) offers seven nights from £2,275, including breakfast.*

*The restoration of Grand Hotel Son Net preserved the palace's original carved wood ceilings and tiled floors*



**AMANGALLA***Galle, Sri Lanka*

Here's an indisputable grande dame. A creamy, 300-year-old mansion set inside a Unesco-listed fort (once the headquarters of Dutch naval commanders), Amangalla is a living history book. While it's adorned with beautiful Sri Lankan dark-wood furniture, it has all the modern appliances you'd ever need. As for the decor, accents of greenery and whitewashed walls are the order of the day; the balustraded verandas, with their Victorian-tiled floors, are the perfect spots to treat yourself to afternoon tea (those scones!). Evening repasts are an art form, with a superb prawn and mustard curry with lemongrass-infused coconut rice. A welcome addition is the stylish jade green pool, bordered by palm trees wrapped in fairy lights. But everything here is of the highest quality, including the coconut ice cream by the pool. After a dip, head to a hydrotherapy suite for a revitalising cool plunge and sauna. *Abercrombie & Kent* ([abercrombiekent.co.uk](http://abercrombiekent.co.uk)) offers seven nights from £3,755, including breakfast, flights and transfers.

*In a green oasis of a garden, the swimming pool at Amangalla is lined with jade slate*

*With frescoes and ancient marble, every room at Palazzo Talia encapsulates Luca Guadagnino's graceful and ironic design*

**PALAZZO TALIA***Rome, Italy*

This is exactly the kind of place Elio and Oliver would have dreamed of staying in André Aciman's seminal novel *Call Me by Your Name*. Which, of course, was later turned into a film by Luca Guadagnino. This being the director's first hotel interiors project, it is, as you'd expect, an eclectic and kaleidoscopic, pastel-hued redesign of a 16th-century palazzo. Perhaps acknowledging its roots as a shrine to the Roman gods, this aristocratic villa – swagged and gilded, dripping in crystal and frescoed with a host of deities – has a rich ecclesiastical history to match. (It was once home to Pope Leo X de' Medici's secretary, Angelo Colocci, as well as to such noble clergymen of the Renaissance as Cardinal Tonti, the Archbishop of Nazareth.) Today, you want to be sitting in the bar, under the 1940s chandelier by Venetian artist Simone Cenedese, nursing a signature cocktail inspired by the Muses – the Erato and Clio are highlights – while bathing in the iridescent glow of its burnished-mirror walls. Then there's the dining room, which feels straight from a Guy Bourdin photoshoot, gloriously surreal in a slightly off-kilter 1930s-meet-1970s way. Here, you can savour chef Marco Coppola's divine menu of anchovies stuffed with provolone cheese, followed by a memorable spaghetti alla Nerano. If you were to imagine your ultimate last supper, it would most likely include his exceptional ragu and vongole with bottarga. *Doubles from £666* ([palazzotalia.com](http://palazzotalia.com)). □

# Off-grid glamour

*Stargaze in Umbria, gallop on a Kenyan beach, go barefoot in the Balearics: it's all about connecting head and heart in places where a pristine environment has top billing*



*Bioclimatic design at Gundari, the only sustainable five-star hotel on Folegandros, includes solar heating and stonework excavated on-site*

## **GUNDARI** *Folegandros, Greece*

Bumping and lurching along a rough, red-dirt track through a lunar landscape, vast and empty, you step out of the hotel's 4x4 to be greeted by the sound of wind whipping in your ears. This far-flung property crowns a swathe of the south-eastern coast of the island of Folegandros, and is a stone's throw from the small village of Petousis, the first agricultural settlement on the island. If you want the idiosyncratically Greek good life – the kind of simplicity, straightforwardness and elegance that only the Cyclades can conjure up – Gundari may be the place for you. Here, each of the 27 suites' interiors are pared-back and calming, with the whitest sheets and creamy stone showers, and there's nothing to distract you from their focal points: the private infinity pools where you just gaze out at the most magnificent expanse of big blue. That sense of visceral connection to the Aegean is transformative. It clears the mind and heart, and returns you to something much larger. And wait until you try one of the spa's holistic massages, when you're kneaded with hot herbal presses personally chosen by the herbalist Maria Christodoulou. Breakfasts are unhurried, the tables set with peaches,

platters of local cheeses, the flakiest spanakopita and centrepieces dripping with honeycomb and wild flowers. The coffee's just right, and scrambled eggs provide fuel for a morning's zigzag hike up to the village of Chora. Days are wild, vivid and elemental, especially as the whole premise of the hotel is that you venture on as many 'safaris' as you can, following trails to such preternaturally beautiful bays as that of Agios Nikolaos, where the taverna of dreams awaits. Here, memories are made of devouring grilled-to-perfection seabass and octopus, followed by siestas beneath an ancient olive tree; otherwise, the hotel can arrange divine boat trips to even more isolated spots. As for eating at Gundari, the line-up is small but special: a hushed restaurant – its windows thrown open to a pool that drops into the wilderness and horizon – where the chef Lefteris Lazarou grills, smokes and ferments local ingredients into artful dishes. When you're the island's only five-star hotel, it takes a lot of conviction to lay on so little. But Gundari defines luxury differently from most. It invites you to go truly off-grid and immerse yourself in a beguiling, elusive and particularly magical experience. *Doubles from £520, including breakfast (gundari.com).*



*Mama Tina villa at Kinondo Kwetu, a resort that is protected as a 'Kaya' area of holy forests and sacred lands*

### KINONDO KWETU Diani Beach, Kenya

There's something about Kinondo Kwetu that makes time slow to a halt and rekindles your senses. Its guests may call this hideaway their 'home from home', but it's the actual home of Ida and Filip Andersson, who are descendants of Baroness Karen Blixen, hence the *Out of Africa*-style portraits in the thatched main house – the heart of the resort. Carved from stone and wood, it spills onto a beach which, at happy hour, flickers with the lights of hurricane lamps. By day, head to the powder-soft beach, which stretches for miles with daybeds that are shaded by thickets of trees, where watermelon juice appears like magic. In the stables, you can mount a glossy horse and splash along the shore at sunset. Mornings start with calming Hatha at the yoga pavilion; afternoons are for massages administered alfresco atop Kenyan-printed cottons to the sound of the waves. It's a simple existence, but one that celebrates the art of living well. *Doubles from £443, full board (kinondo-kwetu.com).*

### DUNAS DE FORMENTERA

#### *Balearic Islands, Spain*

The paradise of Formentera is where you want to be in the height of summer, its white beaches and crystal waters providing refuge for Ibizaans escaping the all-nighters at Pacha and DC10. On its western shore lies the Dunas, a minimalist, zero-waste hotel where everything is environmentally aware, from wooden toothbrushes to sand-timers that encourage guests to keep showers to less than five minutes. But 'eco' need not mean 'budget', and this is quite the luxurious escape. Imagine palatial sandstone rooms that give sea views from a king-sized bed, not to mention a 20-second walk to the infinity pool. True, with the Med only metres away, that pool barely gets a look-in, but not so the open-air restaurant, where the fish-heavy menu offers seabass, octopus and tuna carpaccio. And when the ambience gets a little too chilled, there's always the lively beachside bar, playing George Michael and Bob Dylan: not close enough to disturb sleepers but near enough if you feel the need. *Doubles from £457, including breakfast (dunasdeformentera.com).*

*Swathes of Unesco-protected underwater meadows add to the serenity of a stay at Dunas de Formentera*



### TENUTA DI MURLO Perugia, Italy

Thousands of hectares of idyllic Umbria... verdant rolling hills dotted with olive groves, woodland and lakes, where the sun is forever aglow: it could be a Piero della Francesca painting. In fact, this is the view from your bedroom window or sunlounger, the terrace or wherever else you care to wander on Murlo's private estate. Owned by the Carabba Tettamanti family for 300 years (the current matriarch is Princess Diana Radziwill), it's one of the most exclusive in the country. Housing nine luxury villas, along with a dreamy cottage, chic apartment and three rooms, it allows visitors to enjoy

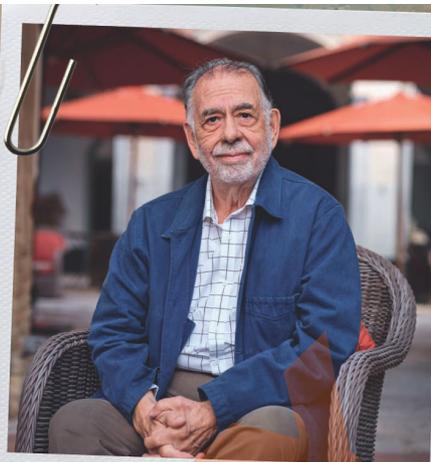
fabulous Italian rural living at its finest. While guests are free to roam the grounds – and go truffle foraging, hiking and riding, or visit the beehives, or kitchen for cookery lessons – one of the biggest draws here is privacy. The concierge retains hotel luxury despite the seclusion: housekeeping appears daily and among the multiple services on offer are deliveries of pizza or the chef's tagliatelle with wild boar ragu – as well as massages, manicures, yoga and personal training. And if you suddenly find yourself in need of that extra-special bottle of wine, a pair of binoculars to stargaze or just an international plug socket, rest assured; they'll be on your doorstep at the speed of light. *Doubles from £175, including breakfast (inside.murlo.com).* □

*Find a timeless landscape scattered with discreet villas and a restaurant set in a medieval farmhouse at Tenuta di Murlo*

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTHA VOSDOU

# I did it my way!

*It's the magic touch of a visionary owner that puts these temples of taste in a league of their own. Introducing the hosts with the most...*



FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA

## PALAZZO MARGHERITA Basilicata, Italy

Why is Francis Ford Coppola so good at creating hotels? According to his daughter, Sofia: 'He has that director's eye for detail.' (Something you can appreciate in the splendour of the salon here, watching her father's archive or a selection of his favourite films.) Palazzo Margherita is as individual and confounding as the wild Basilicata landscape in which it's set; Coppola has realised with rare sensitivity what qualities such a hideaway deserves. As seductive as it is secluded, this is a proper place of the south: of heat, shutters and palm trees, of wide contemplative spaces and frescoed ceilings, of historic cloisters cloaked in bougainvillea and laced with sprays of old jasmine. The 19th-century property has long been one of Italy's most elegant hotels, where even the chambermaids' green-and-white-striped dresses are the definition of chic. Decorator Jacques Grange has given its succession of beautifully designed rooms – each in his signature, faded pastel colours and named after a Coppola family member – a light, almost minimalist feel. (Note such subtle personal touches as the framed film posters and the heavenly almond-and-neroli scent devised by Sofia.) The building retains its old-world glamour and restorative sense of peace, particularly by the pool, where you can savour the gentleness of life. Breakfast runs late, lunch all day, and the latter's daily-changing menu of refined pasta dishes, including a memorable green bean with tomato and ricotta spaghetti, goes exceptionally well with the local, earthy, biodynamic wines. In charge is GM Rossella, always alert to the minutiae, whose innate knowledge of running the hotel as if it were a director's own holiday-haven means there is soul in everything here. *Doubles from £433, including breakfast* ([thefamilycoppolahideaways.com](http://thefamilycoppolahideaways.com)).

*Francis Ford Coppola created Palazzo Margherita in the town that was the birthplace of his grandfather*



Robin Hutson put the tricks he learned working on Chewton Glen and Babington House into practice at The Pig in the Cotswolds



## THE PIG IN THE COTSWOLDS

*Gloucestershire, UK*

It's a testament to his understanding of *l'art de vivre* that Robin Hutson totally anticipated the zeitgeist when he started The Pig chain more than 14 years ago. For his is an invigorating way of seeing the English country hotel, focusing on generous, kind and fun hospitality and – more importantly – the food. Pickling, smoking and curing apart, he has shown deep commitment to the kitchen gardens at all his properties. His first job was commis-waiting at Claridge's. Later, he did stints at the Berkeley and Hôtel de Crillon. Above all, what he learned was how to create a sense of authenticity. That's the hallmark of his group, and also of the newly opened Barnsley House: a tangible sense of soul, encouraging the highly appealing illusion that you're a favoured friend down for the weekend. It may well be the loveliest of all his establishments. And talk about a glamorous potager garden: it's everything you'd expect at the former home of the celebrated horticulturist Rosemary Verey. Thanks to Hutson's wife, creative director Judy, the interiors here are replete with floral charm, not least in the bedrooms, decorated in a harmonious mix of pinks and purples. This is the final Pig to be launched by the Hutsons, who are retiring this month. They are the most enchanting of proprietors, with a flair for doing things their own way. *Doubles from £265 (thepighotel.com).*

TATLER  
AWARD-WINNER  
2025

ROBIN & JUDY HUTSON

*José António Uva is the eighth generation of his family to have lived at São Lourenço do Barrocal*



JOSÉ ANTÓNIO UVA

## SÃO LOURENÇO DO BARROCAL

*Monsaraz, Portugal*

This is a welcoming destination; its sensitively restored farm buildings are strung between an old bullfighting ring and the gardens and pools beyond. And though it's been in the same family for 200 years – apart from a hiatus following Portugal's 1974 revolution – the estate's origins run even deeper: it's guarded by ancient menhirs and Neolithic dolmens. Current owner José António Uva fell in love with the *propriedade* as a child, but properly returned in 2002. In 2006, he began working with the architect Eduardo

Souto de Moura on its restoration, while the studio Anahory Almeida, founded by José's wife Ana, undertook the interior decoration. Connection to the land is at the core of everything here – Uva believes you plant vineyards for yourself, olive groves for your children and cork trees for your grandchildren. You can feel it when you're wrapped in thick woolen blankets in the ancient amphitheatre, drinking honeyed herb infusions while an astrologer teaches you to chart the constellations. *Doubles from £350, including breakfast (barrocal.pt).* ▷



**CASTELLO DI VICARELLO**

*Tuscany, Italy*

Nowhere is as steeped in romance as this Tuscan wonderland, a honey-coloured 11th-century castello that was rescued from ruin by Carlo and Aurora Baccheschi Berti and opened as a hotel in 2003. Today, this 10-suite (and one villa) hotel is run by their sons: Neri, who was born in the castle by candlelight; Brando, who manages the winery; and Corso. Talk about sequestered – after driving to a remote village deep in the dusty emerald hills, guests must continue down an ever-narrowing track to reach the gates. Inside, they will discover totally eccentric decor: the drawing room and conservatory-style dining room filled with Indonesian teak furniture and African artefacts, as well as an abundance of stuffed pheasants and ducks. At aperitivo hour, the terrace comes alive with the sound of cicadas and clinking negronis (the bar team knows how to shake up a mean vermentino, too); the organic kitchen gardens provide much of the produce for the superlative daily pasta dish or to compliment the local game and boar; and all are best accompanied by the family’s own wine. To enjoy bruschetta while stargazing from the rooftop balcony, or from the cobbled courtyard beneath a wisteria- and jasmine-enveloped canopy, is pure perfection. *Doubles from £663, including breakfast (castellodivicarello.com).*



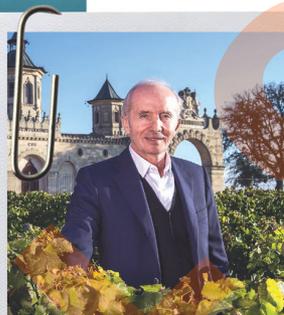
**NERI  
BACCHESCHI BERTI**

*Castello di Vicarello was restored over 12 years by Carlo and Aurora Baccheschi Berti*

**LA RÉSERVE**

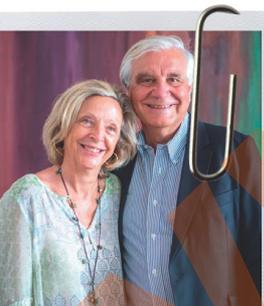
*Paris, France*

In a city where thousands of boutique hotels jostle for attention, there’s a certain stardust that sets La Réserve Paris apart, sprinkled by its group’s owner, tastemaker extraordinaire Michel Reybier. To stay in this 19th-century mansion, which formerly belonged to Napoleon III’s half-brother, is a hedonist’s fantasy. During fashion week, the likes of Kate Moss, Kim Jones and the Beckhams are in residence: spot them hiding out in the library – a fabulous dark-red space worthy of Diana Vreeland, punctuated with leather-bound volumes – or in the trompe l’oeil-painted smoking room, perfect for sipping a late-night Napoleon brandy. Another of Reybier’s passions is wine, as evidenced by his own label, Cos d’Estournel. This elixir is best enjoyed in the gilded surroundings of Le Gabriel restaurant, which was awarded three Michelin stars last March. *Doubles from £792 (lareserve-paris.com).*



**MICHEL REYBIER**

*Michel Reybier’s high-voltage elegance makes La Réserve a temple of design*



**CAROLE + OLIVIER  
PECOUX**

*With an eye for art, Carole and Olivier Pecoux curate a rotation of paintings at Can Albertí*

**CAN ALBERTÍ 1740**

*Menorca, Spain*

In 2021, when Hauser & Wirth flung open the doors of its Menorcan art centre, aesthetes flocked like moths to a flame. But Menorca was an artistic destination long before the Swiss behemoth put down roots; as was Can Albertí 1740, standing proudly in pink just a stone’s throw from the historic streets and renowned modern-art galleries of the island’s capital. Inside, whitewashed walls, rattan lighting and art deco cabinetry are complemented by pops of terracotta. The rooms, decorated in the signature Balearic style, are light and airy, with nods to the waterside location in such details as the burnt-orange coral embroidered onto cushions and seaweed prints. Breakfast items are locally sourced; think traditional magdalena cake, Mahón cheese and sobrasada sausage. But the real showstoppers here are the sculptures and the paintings that hang alongside a framed Hermès scarf on the sitting-room walls, surveying a selection of French coffee-table books. In this hotel, Parisian owners Carole and Olivier Pecoux have fused their passions for art and philanthropy, displaying and auctioning the work of up-and-comers, as well as organising concerts in aid of Balearic charities at the nearby Teatro Principal. *Doubles from £150 (hotelcanalberti.com).* □



# Island splendour

*Gastronomic delights, luxurious hotels and wild adventures await in the beautiful Cayman Islands*

**THERE IS NO PLACE ON EARTH** quite like the Cayman Islands. A British Overseas Territory of sugar-soft sands, incredible culture and delicious cuisine, it's a supremely special locale that too few explore.

There's no end of spoiling places to stay across all three islands (Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman) from the opulent hotels that line Grand Cayman's famous Seven Mile Beach to the private villas equipped with every luxury you could possibly dream of. Nature, too, is at your fingertips. Snorkelling adventures transport you to an otherworldly landscape populated by stingrays, starfish and sea turtles, and with 365 dive sites you could explore somewhere new every day of the year. The coral reefs teem with life, and rare birds and blue iguanas dart through the wilderness. Stay up late to kayak beneath moonlit skies, with the bioluminescent waters an echo of the twinkling stars above.

Approximately 130 nationalities call this paradise home, a diversity reflected in the islands' rich dining scene. Highlights span the globe, from Lucky Rabbit's Japanese dishes to Agua's Italian-Peruvian fusion food. There is also an abundance of local flavour to be found in beachside restaurants and fine dining establishments. The Brasserie, Grand Cayman,

*The Cayman Islands are a wonderful destination in any season, thanks to the year-round sunshine*



*Clockwise from top:  
Grand Cayman's  
Seven Mile Beach;  
Hotel Indigo;  
delicious local cuisine*

for example, serves delicious farm-to-table dishes, while local favourite Grand Old House offers a menu of elevated Caribbean classics and one of most impressive wine cellars in the entire archipelago.

The Cayman Islands are a wonderful destination in any season thanks to year-round sunshine, but a steady temperature of 28°C between November and April make them a clever choice to escape the winter chills. And with five British Airways flights a week from London Heathrow via the Bahamas, visiting this stupendous place couldn't be easier.



**JOLLY SNIFFING!**  
*Tenuta Chiudendone in Tuscany hosts autumn walks to dig up prized white truffles, followed by lunch*



*Amber Guinness advocates buying seasonal cheeses, truffles and olive oil from local markets*

## POSTCARD FROM TUSCANY

# EARTHLY TREASURES

*Foraged by secretive hunters, white truffles are rareties most definitely to be sniffed at, says Amber Guinness*

IT WAS ON A SUNNY AUTUMN DAY many years ago, while working on the prep line in The River Cafe, that I first became aware of Meera Cortesi, London's most glamorous truffle dealer. I was peeling garlic cloves when their pungency was overpowering by an intoxicating scent-wave of white truffles, one of my favourite smells in the world. And bounding in with the whiff came Meera, very different from the truffle dealers I'd come across during my childhood in Tuscany (who tended to be khaki-clad weather-beaten farmers). Instead, she was all bouncy hair and tight jeans, wearing giant sunglasses and a felt cowboy hat. With the air of a magician, she spread a cloth over a table in the middle of the restaurant and laid out a selection of perfectly sized and formed white truffles for proprietor Ruthie and the head chefs to choose from for the menu that night.

This memory has remained vivid to me, so I was thrilled to be invited last November – peak white truffle season – to Meera's first-ever truffle hunting weekend. Hosted for a select group of guests, the event was a chance for her to bring together a group of like-minded people – in this case, chefs from some of London's top Michelin-starred restaurants, plus a couple of amateur obsessives like me – to gorge on white truffle at the specialist San Miniato fair, followed by a night at the agritourist farmstead of Tenuta Chiudendone and a genuine truffle hunt in the grounds the next morning.

I had often wondered how this impossibly glamorous Londoner became *the* truffle dealer to the city's best restaurants. (Having grown up

in a truffle-growing region, I'm very aware of what closely guarded secrets the best areas are.) Nevertheless, Meera appears to have won over all the right people in Tuscany and Umbria, whence her husband hails. And as I spent the weekend tossing back glasses of wine with her, I realised it was in large part due to her charm and fluent Italian.

The truffle hunting scene has become crowded, and it's important to choose the right person to get you past the gatekeepers. Otherwise, you just end up going for a walk through some woods, to witness feigned excitement from the hunters when their dogs dig up a very obviously pre-planted treasure. At the wonderful Tenuta Chiudendone, owners Francesco and Isabella Cavallini have made the restoration of the farm their life's work, laying on seasonal experiences for guests, growing organic vines for their wines and olives for their oil, and tending the forest to maximise the conditions in which truffles happily grow.

Our morning of hunting was one of the best I've ever been on, in some of the most beautiful woods, with an experienced hunter and dog. We found several truffles buried deeper at the foot of stumps and trees than I've ever seen, the soil emanating their heady aroma. And afterwards we went back to Tenuta Chiudendone and shaved our precious haul over plates of buttery tagliolini. Meera plans to host future weekends in Umbria and France, and if you get the chance to join one of these rare treats, seize it like a truffle. □

[cortesi.uk](http://cortesi.uk); [tenutachiudendone.com](http://tenutachiudendone.com)

## THE TRUFFLE HUNTER'S ESSENTIALS



H Dye blanket, £4,590, **HERMÈS**



Hand tool set, £96, **LE PRINCE JARDINIER**



Park Soleil D'Hermès picnic basket, £13,360, **HERMÈS**



Laureate platform desert boots, £1,150, **LOUIS VUITTON**



Knives, £499 for six, **FORGE DE LAGUIOLE** at [rivercafe.com](http://rivercafe.com)



*Italian Coastal* by Amber Guinness, £29.99, at [waterstones.com](http://waterstones.com)



*The distinctive truffle scent is best savoured on buttery pasta*

**TATLER**

# Guilty as sin

*All that glistens truly is gold... Welcome to the new Gilded Age where storied architectural landmarks have been returned to virtuoso splendour*



*Lashings of gold add theatrical élan to opulent rooms and suites in the original 18th-century Passalacqua villa*

## PASSALACQUA

*Lake Como, Italy*

Centuries ago, the lure of Lake Como's beauty and temperate climate led wealthy families and even a pope to build status-symbol retreats on the waterfront. These villas remain the most glamorous of residences; and of those transformed into luxury hotels, the most compelling is surely Passalacqua, the 18th-century home of music patron Count Andrea Lucini-Passalacqua, whose grandest suites are today named after Bellini heroines. Since opening in 2022, after an operatically gorgeous restoration by the De Santis family, its name has become synonymous with boutique-hotel perfection. Guests are welcomed into an enclave of marble and frescoes, Fortuny lamp shades and Murano chandeliers, and tantalisingly invited to treat it as home-from-home. (Easy to do in Suite Eloisa, a corner room with a lake view, that's both exquisite and sumptuously comfortable, shimmering in Rubelli silks and mirrored furniture.) You can wander into the *casa* kitchen to find oven-warm breakfast marmalade crostata, enjoy coffee on a cushion on the grand outdoor steps and savour lemon-peel and anchovy pizza in the poolside glasshouse. While dining ranges from salon-formal to casual-chic in hideaway garden spots, the emphasis is on living with modern brio a life of *dolce far niente*, zipping about in a vivid orange open-top Fiat 500 buggy or cruising on the lake in a vintage-style Riva. And the wow factor continues in the spa, unveiled this year and carved from secret tunnels that run under the property to the lakefront. *Doubles from £1,284, including breakfast (passalacqua.it).*

## THE PLAZA

*New York, USA*

A lavish Beaux Arts palace hotel, this enduring New York classic continues to sprinkle stardust on its guests. Back in 1907, Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt was the first to arrive in a carriage, and ever since, it has remained a dynasty HQ, frequented by Kennedys and Gettys. It's here that the Duke and Duchess of Windsor danced on the 10th anniversary of Edward's abdication – and where Truman Capote threw his legendary Black and White Ball. The rooms are hard to leave, especially if you're a chrysophilist: headboards are gilded, the bedding has gold accents – and the taps in the bathroom? Gold-plated. The hotel is vast: aside from rooms and suites, it now accommodates Carnegie Suites with a park view, as well as two ballrooms and a Guerlain spa. And the cumulative effect is both nostalgic and bling – but in a good way. After all, doesn't everyone want to be Kay Thompson's heroine Eloise and live at The Plaza? *Doubles from £954 (theplazany.com).*



*Light from the original stained-glass roof highlights the opulent details of The Palm Court at The Plaza*



*Gold leaf adorns a salon in Rosewood's Hôtel de Crillon that is a design homage to Marie-Antoinette, who once took piano lessons in the room*

### HÔTEL DE CRILLON, A ROSEWOOD HOTEL Paris, France

Extravagant romantics, look no further. Standing proudly on the Place de la Concorde, this Parisian institution is Marie-Antoinette in hotel form. And you'll see why it has long been the benchmark of the city's five-star-palace scene as soon as you behold the chandeliers, the glittering ballroom and the silken elegance of its suites; not to mention the gilded environs of the pool, lined with 17,600 gold scales. Seasoned with French esprit, the interiors have the right amount of oomph and shimmer to conjure up a modern-day mini-Versailles. (As for dinner, the Michelin-starred L'Écrin – where chef Boris Campanella does wondrous things with foie gras, turbot and Burgundian beef – is a must.) From the grandest staircases and stucco draperies to the exquisite perfection of the suites, this place is an interiors masterpiece; and that's thanks to artistic director Aline Asmar d'Amman, who collaborated with four interior designers: Tristan Auer, Chahan Minassian, Cyril Vergniol and the late polymath Karl Lagerfeld. Yes, you know where you want to be, despite all the fabulous happenings in Paris: eating cake from the hotel's Butterfly Pâtisserie in a bed that owes its sumptuousness to a Simmons mattress sheathed in Rivolta Carmignani linen. *Doubles from £1,758 (rosewoodhotels.com).*

### SHANGRI-LA PARIS Paris, France

The sweeping staircase here is so magnificent that you'll feel inadequate unless wearing a tiara or white tie to descend it, but being the former home of Napoleon's great-nephew Prince Roland Bonaparte, the Shangri-la Paris is all about pomp and pageantry. So trip out on the luxury of its palatial rooms and signature suites that give unparalleled views of the Eiffel Tower, and enter the ultimate comfort zone. This hotel just blasts out fabulousness, especially in its Shang Palace restaurant, whose divine menu features blue lobster ravioli, all kinds of seafood dumplings and a memorable Peking duck. And if you're craving even more sublimity, you can head to the colonnaded swimming pool or the spa, which offers a roster of rituals that tend to both skin and soul (among them the much-lauded Kobido-inspired facial massage treatment, as well as a range of energy-boosting Traditional Chinese Medicine therapies, such as a Chi Nei Tsang abdominal massage). Afterwards, recline in one of those pampering suites – a favourite is the powder-blue-and-gold L'Appartement Prince Bonaparte – and marvel at the show-stopping, opulent and historic artisanal skills displayed in them. *Doubles from £1,673 (shangri-la.com).* □



*Authentic giltwork gleams in an apartment at the Shangri-la Paris that was once the private residence of Prince Roland Bonaparte*

POSTCARD FROM ZIMBABWE

# PARTY ANIMALS!

*How to turn 30 in style? Vimbai Masiyiwa whizzed her friends off on a celebratory safari*

I CELEBRATED A MILESTONE THIS year, my 30th birthday, so I wanted to do something special to mark it. And naturally, I wanted to do it in Zimbabwe, where I was born and where I built my travel business, Batoka Africa. I founded the company as a mission to use tourism for social change, empowering local communities through employment, education and entrepreneurial opportunities. From the very beginning, the idea was to create a business model that would actively include the local community.

I've always had fond memories of family trips to Zimbabwe during school holidays, when my parents would take us to various parts of the country: Great Zimbabwe, Nyanga, Kariba, and many more. But best of all were always the Victoria Falls.

This is where I saw my first elephant, becoming mesmerised by the silent grace of that massive, gentle creature. And what a landscape! It was – and still remains – majestic. The interplay between lush rainforest, rugged cliffs and the Zambezi River's powerful cascade into the gorge is breathtaking; the mist, rainbows and serenity in this part of the national park make it a truly meditative place.

This, I decided, would be the venue for my 'party'. Here, my friends from around the world – many of whom have supported me on my Bakota journey – could experience not only the beauty of Zimbabwe but of the business I've created. In particular, the Zambezi Sands camp, which now comprises 10 luxurious tented suites, some with a private plunge pool, right on the river, and Gorges Lodge, a more wellness-focused project – both of which are about reconnecting with nature and yourself on a deeper level. And that's how 16 of us, including friends from around the globe, ended up spending five days in the park, rather than the typical tourist's three, on a mission to enjoy all the place had to offer.

Several moments stood out for me. One was an intimate breakfast right by the first lookout point, which was truly breathtaking. Another happened on our drive from the airport: only 15 minutes from camp, we turned a corner and found ourselves face-to-face with a herd of about 10 elephants, grazing as the sun set behind them. (Elephants were the first animals I ever saw in the bush, so these being the first my friends encountered felt symbolic.) One young male calf, a bit cheeky, came close to our vehicle, provoking a mixture of awe and a little bit of fear in my friends.

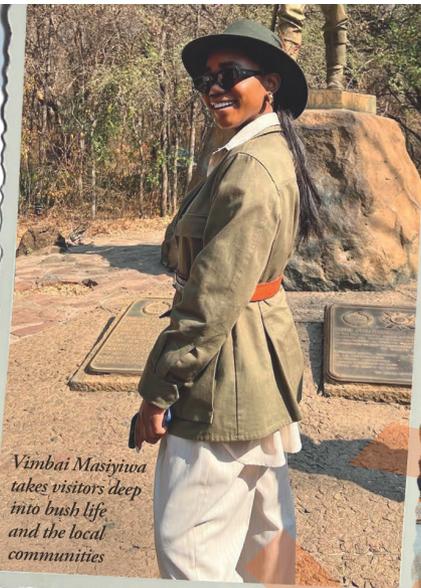
For most of them, this was their first safari, and so it reminded me how special wildlife experiences really are. When you work in my industry, it's easy to take the fauna for granted. But seeing my friends' reactions rekindled my love of the bush; and what I loved most was their excitement about the 'small' things. Even spotting warthogs brought them joy! I'd been a little stressed, hoping they'd see such big-name beasts as lions and giraffes, but they were just as fascinated by an old elephant skull... Their sense of wonder and excitement really made the experience unforgettable.

A further highlight was the traditional meal we enjoyed, beginning with 'muriwo' – a type of kale cooked with peanut butter – and moving on to spiced meat and 'sadza', our pounded maize meal, along with local gravies.

And then there was our visit to the Jafuta Foundation, a partner of Batoka, where we took part in a jewellery-making workshop led by local women who have started their own brand. We listened for hours as they shared their stories with us before we took a helicopter ride back to camp.

It was the end of a perfect day – and one that encapsulated all I'd wanted to do: bringing my personal and professional lives together in a place that means so much to me. □

[batokafrica.com](http://batokafrica.com)



*Vimbai Masiyiwa takes visitors deep into bush life and the local communities*



*Breakfast in the bush in Zambezi National Park after a dawn walking safari*



*Vimbai's guests stayed in tented suites at Zambezi Sands Lodge in Victoria Falls*



ISLAND STORY  
*Nicolas Niarchos  
at the Cathedral of  
St George, the main  
Catholic place of  
worship on Syros*

POSTCARD FROM GREECE

# SYROS, SERIOUSLY?

*Move over Mykonos. So long Santorini.  
Nicolas Niarchos falls for the sirens' call of  
one of the smallest islands in the Cyclades*

**IT'S EVENING, AND MUSIC SPILLS** onto the streets of Ano Syros. It's a song by the late Markos Vamvakaris, the strings plaintive yet full of vim as he sings of the fire in his heart for a Catholic girl from Syros; he is the island's favourite son. In a museum, I have seen his gold rings, his canes and his bouzoukia (long-necked Greek lutes). Now, people dance to the tune, shadows on the walls, visitors and locals melding into one oscillation between shade and light.

I have come with my partner to the island of Syros for a break, to finish writing a book, yet there is so much to see and do. By night, we eat at Hygge: squid spaghetti and dry Assyrtiko wine. By day, we toss our bodies into the sea: the dark waters off Glysoura beach, or from the

platform under the neoclassical façades of the island's capital, Hermoupolis. On one occasion, we make a sunset hike to Agios Stefanos, a church wedged into the rocks on the west side. There are people if we want to see them, splendid isolation if we don't. It is this quality that attracted Oana Aristide, the owner and eminence grise of the Aristide Hotel. 'It's not just a touristy island,' she says. 'So, off season, you don't feel like a hermit.' Mykonos may have its parties and Santorini its views. Syros has a bit of everything.

Oana is taking us for a meander round some of its most beautiful old homes, where painted ceilings and rambling ballrooms abound. The island has been wealthy for a long time. It was protected by the French during the Ottoman

period, and developed an important shipping industry in the 19th century. During the war of independence, when Greek refugees from far-flung islands found themselves here, they began to establish Hermoupolis. But the island's Catholic population kept to its cluster of old Cycladic homes and ancient churches on their precisely conical hill: Ano, or Upper, Syros.

Within a few decades, the capital had a thriving shipyard, a theatre inspired by Milan's La Scala and stately mansions such as the Aristide. Kalypso, a local guide, tells us that 'a traveller of the time compared it to a little Manchester'. And in a stroke of luck, as my book is about the lithium-ion battery supply chain, it even has a fascinating tale to tell about alternative fuel sources.

In the 1970s, when the island's businesses were falling into decline, Giannis Goulandris – a shipping magnate and the shipyard's owner – decided he could turn the town around by building electric cars, of all things; a little yellow Enfield 8000 with a 12-volt DC motor still sits in the local museum. But Goulandris was no early Elon Musk, and only made 120 cars. Some say he shelved the project to obtain better terms from oil companies; some that he was ahead of his time.

By 2017, Oana, a Romanian economist with Greek and Yemeni roots, had become a regular visitor; that year, along with her sister and mother, she decided to buy a mansion dating from Syros's heyday and convert it into a hotel. The building, which had fallen into disuse after a stint headquartering the tax authority for the Cycladic Islands, was given a loving renovation; and now the rooms are fitted with marble table-tops, quirky art, even outdoor bathtubs.

Downstairs, a maroon bar hosts mixologists who serve drinks either at the counter or in a sensuous walled garden filled with falling flowers. I grow partial to the Old Tricks, a cocktail that sparkles with bourbon and ginger from the Indies. On the roof, Oana has created a restaurant that serves succulent lamb and, for dessert, a perfectly burnt cheesecake that balances sour cherry with milky sweetness. On some days of the week, she takes dinner outside, holding picnics for guests, who are encouraged to draw from the island's rich heritage and energy.

Since 2013, Syros has grown an arts scene, while a film festival has added to its cultural calendar. And now the grandes dames at Athens salons will tell you how you absolutely must visit the island, laying claim to all kinds of discovery as if they were Stanley, fresh from Congo, even though people have been happily creating here for years. The Aristide's contribution to this efflorescence has not been showy but is nonetheless potent. Oana has created an arts residency, where artists come for short stints and give back through workshops and talks.

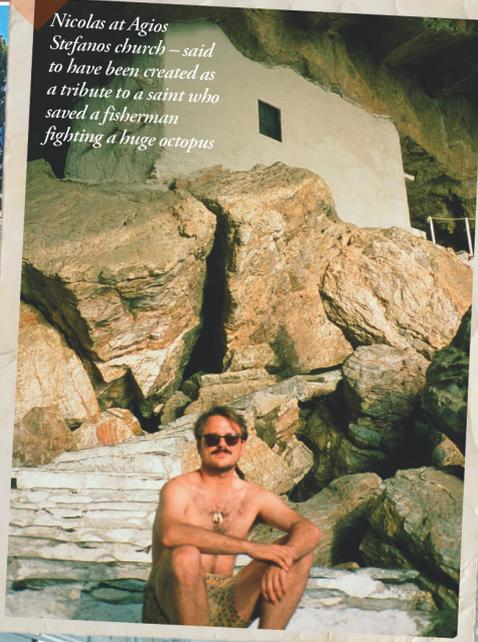
For people who prefer their beach holidays simple, Syros has several establishments that abut sand and sea – one is Hotel Emily, in the southern town of Vari. But much of the island, especially at its northern tip, remains wild and unspoiled, with sheer cliffs and sparse shrubs. I think about writing, then yearn to venture into the hills. I finish a chapter, then take stroll down to the seafront platform, sunning myself among brown bodies, glistening with water. □ [hotelaristide.com](http://hotelaristide.com)



*Artworks in the Kapandriti Suite at Aristide Hotel are by Nicolas Le Beaun Benic and Antigone Kourakou*



*Oana Aristide likes to host outdoor dinners for her guests*



*Nicolas at Agios Stefanos church – said to have been created as a tribute to a saint who saved a fisherman fighting a huge octopus*



*Ceramic tiles from the original mansion in Ano Syros beneath a free-standing stone bathtub at Aristide Hotel*

## ICE QUEEN

A landmark of minimalist poise, Grace la Margna is the first new hotel to open in St Moritz in 50 years

## POSTCARD FROM ST MORITZ

# SLOPE RANGER

*The chill factor: Davina Chelsea on how to survive the winter-sports social whirl*

### IT'S A CRISP MORNING IN ST MORITZ.

Accompanied by the hum of private planes flying over the mountains, I'm standing on its frozen lake in the magnificent Engadin Valley for the first of my assignments in this twinkling destination: Cricket on Ice. I have only just joined the mink-clad crowd that has gathered to watch the British Guards Cricket Club bowl their way to victory in an eccentric league – that includes the Old Cholmeleians (alumni of Highgate School) – when I have to race to the top of town, to catch the Cresta Run's Grand National. Here, seasoned champion Lord Wrottesley and the up-and-coming Zain Mahmood are preparing to dart down the tunnel of ice, while supporters sip on coffee and spectate from the Club House above.

It is a hectic schedule. But in between reporting on glamorous sports by day – and enjoying lavish dinners by night – I can retire to my sleek refuge: Grace la Margna, the new grande dame of St Moritz. This art nouveau-style palace is the first new hotel to open here in 50 years. Brought back to life by chic London-based Divercity Architects, it exudes high-octane Alpine elegance with a twist of James Bond.

The imposing stone building, with burgundy

shutters and floor-to-ceiling windows, is the talk of the gilded town, where competitors include the OG legends of the Kulm and Badrutt's Palace. Inside, it is a much more minimalist affair, with stripped-back, polished interiors, creamy sofas, dim lighting and plenty of marble furniture.

I'm welcomed with a warm lemon towel and herbal tea, then guided to a suite adorned with sumptuous faux-fur blankets, chic Scandi chairs and tweed curtains that frame a panorama of sugar-dusted trees and glacial blue skies. Eventually peeling myself away from the window, I wander down the grand staircase for lunch in the restaurant – appropriately named The View – which overlooks the pine forest surrounding the lake.

Here, I indulge in a bowl of lobster linguine followed by impeccable beef tartare while fashionable guests in Fendi ski ensembles discuss their mornings on the slopes. Bypassing the latter, I venture onto the terrace to sip hot chocolate and watch the sun disappear behind the mountain. But in St Moritz, dusk turns into end-at-dawn disco. So back out I go, up a path to the St Moritz Bobsleigh Club, which by night transforms into one of the world's most exclusive nightspots: Dracula. Entering the infamous flame-lit entrance to be greeted by its front-of-house Italian staff, I join members

for dinner and dancing behind its secret doors.

What happens, however, when you can't face another martini or bowl of lobster pasta? Where is the best spot to achieve a rejuvenating post-party glow? I learn that it's in Grace la Margna's spa, where I relish the Finnish Sauna's potent 'wellness shower'. (Icy water pummels my back, massaging pressure points for the ultimate relaxation.) Frazzled from packed days of hedonism, I swim laps in the luminescent pool and think to myself: hiding out at Grace la Margna really is the best respite from all that high-altitude glamour. □

[gracehotels.com](http://gracehotels.com)



### WHAT TO PACK

Beanie hat, £320, **MIU MIU**. Mink jacket, £17,800, **FENDI**. Skis, £7,350, **LOUIS VUITTON**



TATLER



The contemporary spa pool at Grace la Margna has metal panelling instead of tiles



Ready to party: *Tatler* social editor Davina Chelsea

PHOTOGRAPHS: CLAUDIUS BRECHENMAYER & REINER BAUMANN PHOTOGRAPHY; DARREN GERRISH

POSTCARD FROM AUSTRALIA

# WORLD'S END

*After a 20,000-mile 'slow travel' odyssey,  
Liam Freeman unwinds on Kangaroo Island*

**SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL DOESN'T JUST** mean offsetting carbon footprints; but resetting how we holiday, from where we stay to how we move around. A 20,000-mile round trip to Australia, then, feels unjustifiable unless I spend significant time there; so I block out two months and plan a route that doesn't hinge heavily on internal flights. I travel through the Kakadu National Park and the Daintree Rainforest with Indigenous guides Mandy Muir and Juan Walker respectively; I take a legendary train – The Ghan – from the Northern Territory to South Australia, where my final destination is Kangaroo Island.

Two things draw me to KI, or 'Australia's Galapagos': namely, its luxury eco-retreat, Southern Ocean Lodge, and the fauna. Sustainability is in the bones of the former, whose architecture harnesses the elements. (There's flow-through ventilation; glazing-captured solar energy heats most of the water; and water itself is rainfall collected via a purpose-designed roof.) More than a third of the island is protected, making it a haven for kangaroos, koalas, fur seals and black cockatoos.

In 2020, there was trouble in this paradise: bushfires devastated Kangaroo Island and razed a previous version of the lodge. Architect Max Pritchard – the co-creator of the original – completed its reincarnation in late 2023 with nearly the same footprint as its predecessor. And I am struck by how seamlessly it's embedded into its environment, bordering Flinders Chase National Park. Built from local limestone and slate, at certain angles it seems to disappear into the eucalyptus trees and scrub-covered dunes; a 20-metre wilderness buffer, planted with 45,000 fire-retardant endemic succulents, provides a biodiverse sanctuary for wildlife.

As part of the new design, the lodge's row of 25 coastline-hugging suites has been repositioned to afford more privacy. I'm staying in one called the Kookaburra, after a fishing cutter that foundered on the island's western end

in the 1960s; and on the coffee table in the cosy sunken lounge, a book on KI's shipwrecks lies open on the chapter dedicated to the vessel.

Larger parties might prefer the Baillie Pavilion – two sprawling wings, hung with works by First Nations artists – which is named after the lodge's founding couple. Crowning the clifftops, the hideaway can accommodate eight. But I begin and end my days alone on my private terrace. Over sunrise coffee, I watch as dolphins dance in the surf. As darkness falls, I gaze on the Southern Cross and its jewel-box open cluster, and every night, in my cloud-like king-size, I'm lulled to sleep by the ocean's roar.

One must eat, though; like the building's materials, the restaurant's produce is largely locally sourced. À la carte or buffet breakfasts feature Ildoura Wild Fruits jams and artisan cereals; unmissable dinners include marron, line-caught whiting, pheasant and partridge. What's more, there's a help-yourself Southern Australian cellar, which stocks a very agreeable Poonawatta Eden Valley Grenache.

Further afield? I ride an electric bike to Hanson Bay's white beach, to swim in its azure waters. I'm taken by an accredited guide to Seal Bay – home to a huge breeding colony of Australian sea lions – where I watch as pups frolic. I spend one afternoon exploring KI's geological wonders, including the Remarkable Rocks and the stalactites of Admirals Arch.

At the lodge's heart is the airy, glass-walled Great Room, which has a homely feel despite its grandeur. Furnished with sumptuous circular banquettes, at its centre is a suspended fireplace that survived the 2020 blaze. I often find myself here, unwinding with fellow guests – the seclusion is a magnet for tech entrepreneurs – and between sips of cocktails from the open bar, we find our eyes returning to the vast expanse of the Southern Ocean, all that's between us and Antarctica. We really are, as one of us marvels, 'at the edge of the world'. □

[southernoceanlodge.com.au](http://southernoceanlodge.com.au)



*Much of the water at Southern Ocean Lodge is heated by solar energy, so the spa can be enjoyed guilt-free*



*Liam Freeman took the 95-year-old The Ghan train across the outback en route to Kangaroo Island*



*The views from Southern Ocean Lodge on Kangaroo Island stretch out towards Antarctica*



LOCATION

- Argentina**  
47 Casa Lucia Buenos Aires
- Australia**  
44 Park Hyatt Sydney Sydney  
45 The Royce Melbourne  
89 Southern Ocean Lodge Kangaroo Island
- Austria**  
15 Lanserhof Lans Tyrol
- Bali**  
63 Buahan, A Banyan Tree Escape Payangan
- Belgium**  
68 Botanic Sanctuary Antwerp Antwerp
- Botswana**  
15 San Camp Makgadikgadi Pans National Park
- Caribbean**  
59 Cheval Blanc St-Barth Saint-Barthélemy  
54 Cobblers Cove Barbados  
37 Jumby Bay Island Antigua  
56 Silversands Beach House Grenada
- Cyprus**  
39 Parklane, A Luxury Collection Resort & Spa Limassol
- Egypt**  
5 Hotel Al Moudira Luxor
- France**  
22 Abbaye des Vaux de Cernay Cernay-la-Ville  
27 Arev St Tropez St Tropez  
65 Château Troplong Mondot Saint-Émilion  
56 Four Seasons Hotel Megève Megève  
75 Hôtel de Crillon, A Rosewood Hotel Paris  
27 Hôtel de Toiras Île de Ré  
46 Hôtel des Grands Voyageurs Paris  
5 Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc Cap d'Antibes  
21 Hôtel du Couvent Nice  
31 Hôtel Plaza Athénée Paris  
80 La Réserve Paris Paris  
46 Le Grand Mazarin Paris  
15 Lily of the Valley St Tropez  
75 Shangri-La Paris Paris  
8 Villa La Coste Provence

- French Polynesia**  
25 The Brando Tetiaroa
- Germany**  
38 Schloss Elmau Bavaria  
48 Rosewood Munich Munich
- Greece**  
63 Amanzoe Agios Panteleimonas  
86 Aristide Hotel Syros  
46 The Dolli Athens  
67 Four Seasons Astir Palace Hotel Athens Athenian Riviera  
58 Four Seasons Hydra Hydra  
76 Gundari Folegandros  
42 Hotel Grand Bretagne, A Luxury Collection Hotel Athens  
32 Odera Tinos  
53 One&Only Kéa Island Kéa Island
- Hong Kong**  
30 Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong Admiralty
- India**  
15 Shakti Himalaya Adventure Sikkim
- Italy**  
23 Anantara Convento di Amalfi Grand Hotel Amalfi Coast  
23 Borgo Santo Pietro Tuscany  
66 Bvlgari Hotel Roma Rome  
48 Casa Monti Roma Rome  
80 Castello di Vicarello Tuscany  
65 Cipriani, A Belmond Hotel Venice  
51 Grand Hotel Tremezzo Lake Como  
30 The Gritti Palace, A Luxury Collection Hotel Venice  
60 Hotel Excelsior Venice  
31 Hotel Principe di Savoia Milan  
55 Il San Corrado di Noto Sicily  
78 Palazzo Margherita Basilicata  
73 Palazzo Talia Rome  
74 Passalacqua Lake Como  
82 Tenuta Chiudendone Tuscany  
77 Tenuta di Murlo Perugia  
10 Tenuta Regaleali Sicily  
29 Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, A Belmond Train  
71 The Venice Venice Hotel Venice  
58 Villa Sant'Andrea, A Belmond Hotel Taormina

- Kenya**  
72 Hemingways Eden Resort Nairobi  
77 Kinondo Kwetu Diani Beach
- Maldives**  
26 Soneva Jani Manadhoo  
62 Soneva Secret Makunudhoo Atoll
- Mauritius**  
38 Constance Belle Mare Plage Poste de Flacq  
59 LUX\* Grand Baie Grande Baie
- Mexico**  
26 Hotel Escondido Puerto Escondido
- Mongolia**  
35 Genghis Khan Retreat Orkhon Valley
- Morocco**  
42 Royal Mansour Marrakech
- Netherlands**  
32 Conservatorium Amsterdam  
45 De L'Europe Amsterdam
- Portugal**  
79 São Lourenço do Barrocal Monsaraz
- South Africa**  
10 Babylonsstoren Klapmuts
- Spain**  
22 Abadia Retuerta LeDomaine Valladolid  
80 Can Albertí 1740 Menorca  
77 Dunas de Formentera Balearic Islands  
34 Finca La Donaira Andalucía  
72 Grand Hotel Son Net Mallorca  
26 Marbella Club Málaga
- Sri Lanka**  
73 Amangalla Galle  
35 Uga Ulagalla Anuradhapura
- Switzerland**  
47 Baur au Lac Zürich  
88 Grace la Margna St Moritz  
16 Monte Verità Ascona

- Thailand**  
16 Chiva-Som Hua Hin Hua Hin  
50 Four Seasons Resort Koh Samui Koh Samui  
16 RAKxa Bangkok
- Turkey**  
39 Bijal Antalya  
60 D Maris Bay Muğla  
36 Maxx Royal Bodrum Resort Bodrum
- UK**  
32 The Beaumont London  
68 Beaverbrook Surrey  
43 The Cavendish Hotel Derbyshire  
37 Chewton Glen New Forest  
67 Claridge's London  
50 Cowley Manor Experimental Cotswolds  
43 The Dorchester London  
70 The Emory London  
15 The Gainsborough Bath Spa Bath  
36 Gleneagles Perthshire  
66 The Goring London  
67 Heckfield Place Hampshire  
34 Lucknam Park Wiltshire  
48 Mandarin Oriental Mayfair London  
79 The Pig in the Cotswolds Gloucestershire
- USA**  
51 The Beverly Hills Hotel California  
42 The Carlyle, A Rosewood Hotel New York  
47 Equinox Hotel New York New York  
71 The Fifth Avenue Hotel New York  
15 Golden Door California  
55 Hotel Bel-Air California  
45 Mandarin Oriental Boston Boston  
31 The Mark New York  
38 The Miami Beach Edition Florida  
74 The Plaza New York  
44 Warren Street Hotel New York
- Zimbabwe**  
84 Zambezi Sands Lodge Victoria Falls

**RIM OF BRIGHT WATER**  
All villas at One&Only Kéa Island in Greece have private infinity pools that merge with the blue hues of the Aegean Sea

## ALPHABETICAL

**A**

- 22 Abadia Retuerta LeDomaine Spain
- 22 Abbaye des Vaux de Cernay France
- 73 Amangalla Sri Lanka
- 63 Amanzoe Greece
- 23 Anantara Convento di Amalfi Grand Hotel Italy
- 27 Arev St Tropez France
- 86 Aristide Hotel Greece

**B**

- 10 Babylonstoren South Africa
- 47 Baur au Lac Switzerland
- 32 The Beaumont UK
- 68 Beaverbrook UK
- 51 The Beverly Hills Hotel USA
- 39 Bijal Turkey
- 23 Borgo Santo Pietro Italy
- 68 Botanic Sanctuary Antwerp Belgium
- 25 The Brando French Polynesia
- 63 Buahan, A Banyan Tree Escape Bali
- 66 Bvlgari Hotel Roma Italy

**C**

- 80 Can Albertí 1740 Spain
- 42 The Carlyle, A Rosewood Hotel USA
- 47 Casa Lucia Argentina
- 48 Casa Monti Roma Italy
- 80 Castello di Vicarello Italy
- 43 The Cavendish Hotel UK
- 65 Château Tropolong Mondot France
- 59 Cheval Blanc St-Barth Caribbean
- 37 Chewton Glen UK
- 16 Chiva-Som Hua Hin Thailand
- 65 Cipriani, A Belmond Hotel Italy
- 67 Claridge's UK
- 54 Cobblers Cove Caribbean
- 32 Conservatorium Netherlands
- 38 Constance Belle Mare Plage Mauritius
- 50 Cowley Manor Experimental UK

**D**

- 45 De L'Europe Netherlands
- 60 D Maris Bay Turkey
- 46 The Dollis Greece
- 43 The Dorchester UK
- 77 Dunas de Formentera Spain

**E**

- 70 The Emory UK
- 47 Equinox Hotel New York USA

**F**

- 71 The Fifth Avenue Hotel USA
- 34 Finca La Donaira Spain
- 67 Four Seasons Astir Palace Hotel Athens Greece
- 56 Four Seasons Hotel Megève France
- 58 Four Seasons Hydra Greece
- 50 Four Seasons Resort Koh Samui Thailand

**G**

- 15 The Gainsborough Bath Spa UK
- 35 Genghis Khan Retreat Mongolia
- 66 The Goring UK
- 88 Grace la Margna Switzerland
- 72 Grand Hotel Son Net Spain
- 30 The Gritti Palace, A Luxury Collection Hotel Italy
- 36 Gleneagles UK
- 15 Golden Door USA
- 51 Grand Hotel Tremezzo Italy
- 76 Gundari Greece

**H**

- 67 Heckfield Place UK
- 72 Hemingways Eden Resort Kenya
- 5 Hotel Al Moudira Egypt
- 55 Hotel Bel-Air USA
- 75 Hôtel de Crillon, a Rosewood Hotel France
- 27 Hôtel de Toiras France
- 46 Hôtel des Grands Voyageurs France
- 5 Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc France
- 21 Hôtel du Couvent France
- 26 Hotel Escondido Mexico
- 60 Hotel Excelsior Italy
- 42 Hotel Grand Bretagne, A Luxury Collection Hotel Greece
- 31 Hôtel Plaza Athénée France
- 31 Hotel Principe di Savoia Italy

**I**

- 55 Il San Corrado di Noto Italy
- 30 Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong Hong Kong

**J**

- 37 Jumby Bay Island Caribbean

**K**

- 77 Kinondo Kwetu Kenya

**L**

- 15 Lanserhof Lans Austria
- 80 La Réserve Paris France
- 46 Le Grand Mazarin France
- 15 Lily of the Valley France
- 34 Lucknam Park UK
- 59 LUX\* Grand Baie Mauritius

**M**

- 45 Mandarin Oriental Boston USA
- 48 Mandarin Oriental Mayfair UK
- 26 Marbella Club Spain
- 31 The Mark USA
- 36 Maxx Royal Bodrum Resort Turkey
- 38 The Miami Beach Edition USA
- 16 Monte Verità Switzerland

**O**

- 32 Odera Greece
- 53 One&Only Kéa Island Greece

**P**

- 78 Palazzo Margherita Italy
- 73 Palazzo Talia Italy
- 44 Park Hyatt Sydney Australia
- 39 Parklane, A Luxury Collection Resort & Spa Cyprus
- 74 Passalacqua Italy
- 79 The Pig in the Cotswolds UK
- 74 The Plaza USA

**R**

- 16 RAKxa Thailand
- 48 Rosewood Munich Germany
- 42 Royal Mansour Morocco
- 45 The Royce Australia

**S**

- 15 San Camp Botswana
- 79 São Lourenço do Barrocal Portugal
- 38 Schloss Elmau Germany
- 15 Shakti Himalaya Adventure India
- 75 Shangri-La Paris France
- 56 Silversands Beach House Caribbean
- 26 Soneva Jani Maldives
- 62 Soneva Secret Maldives
- 89 Southern Ocean Lodge Australia

**T**

- 82 Tenuta Chiudendone Italy
- 77 Tenuta di Murlo Italy
- 10 Tenuta Regaleali Italy

**U**

- 35 Uga Ulagalla Sri Lanka

**V**

- 29 Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, A Belmond Train
- 71 The Venice Venice Hotel Italy
- 8 Villa La Coste France
- 58 Villa Sant'Andrea, a Belmond Hotel Italy

**W**

- 44 Warren Street Hotel USA

**Z**

- 84 Zambezi Sands Lodge Zimbabwe

# Secret INGREDIENT

*The dinner takes it all when this superstar is in the kitchen*

By JEAN IMBERT

## HÔTEL PLAZA ATHÉNÉE, PARIS

I have several restaurants at the Plaza Athénée. One is Le Relais Plaza, where the cooking is inspired by my grandmother. Then, there's the more gastronomic Jean Imbert au Plaza Athénée, where we decided to work on the cuisine of Carême, Escoffier and all those great chefs who revolutionised and shaped French gastronomy. All of this is presented in a magnificent setting, sparkling with gilding – which includes a 12-metre-long marble table and lots of chandeliers – because I want my customers to feel transported to another time. And that should be reflected in the dishes, too. Take the Brioche Marie-Antoinette, which is topped with caviar that hides a runny egg yolk at its heart. Yes, it's regal but, at the same time, the brioche gives it a deeply comforting feel.

## CHEVAL BLANC ST-BARTH, SAINT-BARTHÉLEMY

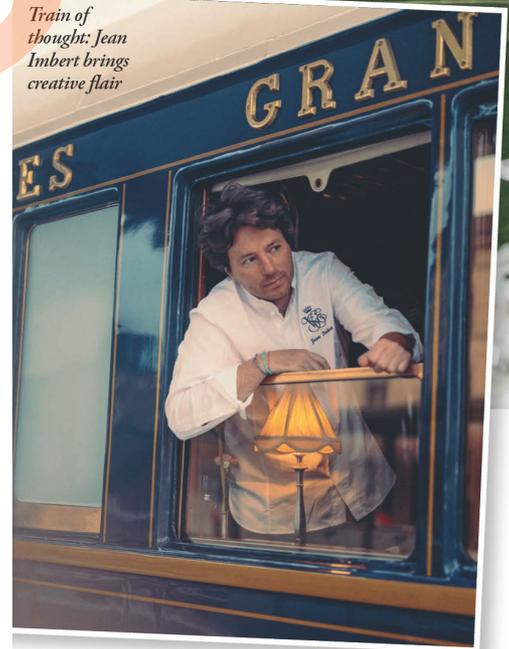
Cheval Blanc St-Barth is on an island in the Caribbean, so I wanted to offer its customers a Gallo-tropical culinary experience. For me, it's always very important to use local produce, which can be a real source of inspiration. You have to set your cuisine in a particular territory, and work with what is available there, which is why no two of my restaurant menus are alike. At La Case, we serve a dessert called Le Sable, which looks like sand and conjures up the island's paradisaical beaches. Obviously, it's not made from real sand, but I hope it's an interesting taste sensation.

## THE BRANDO, TETIAROA

At The Brando, and particularly at Les Mutinés, it was absolutely obvious to me that the restaurant should be built under an overturned boat hull, in reference to *Mutiny on the Bounty*, starring Marlon Brando. Through this movie he discovered Polynesia, in particular, Tetiaroa; but it's also a love story, because it was on its set that he first met his wife Tarita. I wanted to tell this story through the decor, with two original posters from the film – and a crystal chandelier representing HMS Bounty – but also through the menu, which traces the route taken by the mutineers' ship. My favourite item on it is probably our Tetiaroa honey soufflé, because it's the most accomplished in terms of sourcing: the honey, harvested by our beekeeper on the *motu* (reef) right next to the hotel, is totally pure as there is no pollution in this atoll.

*Savour early-morning pains au chocolat or midnight-snack lobster rolls on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express*

*Train of thought: Jean Imbert brings creative flair*



## VENICE SIMPLON-ORIENT-EXPRESS, A BELMOND TRAIN

The Venice Simplon-Orient-Express is soaked in history, has a unique design and is full of fascinating legends. In the menus I conceived for it, I tried to give a sense of place, with meals inspired by countries that it has travelled through: Italy, England, France and Turkey. And with all the guests onboard dressed up for the occasion, it was essential that I match the high-octane atmosphere. I particularly like when we do beef Wellington – in tribute to the train's former passage from London – which I revisit with a few 'Marco Polo' spices, reminiscent of Venice. It's a great dish for the winter season, too. □

PHOTOGRAPHS: BOBY; LUDOWIC BALAY

*Jean Imbert celebrates the culinary heritage of France with a reinterpretation of 18th-century recipes at the Hôtel Plaza Athénée*

*A chandelier in the form of HMS Bounty at Les Mutinés, The Brando*